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THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

CZECHOSLOVAKIA no longer exists as an independent State. That is the brute fact which the British nation must grasp before it encourages the Prime Minister to advance money to a Government which is little more than a vassal of Hitler. The occupation of the Fifth Zone has cut Prague's connections with Brünn and Slovakia. The Hungarian claims threaten to isolate Ruthenia altogether. Clearly there is a well-laid plan to make the frontiers of the new Czech State so fantastic that the Czechs themselves will prefer to enter the Third Reich. When the International Commission permits the Nazis, as it has done, to cut off Prague and Brünn from their electricity works, to bring Pilsen within range of German artillery and even to leave a German-speaking district alone while they seize an adjacent strip which contains no Germans but four coal mines, then it is clear that Hitler's control of Prague is complete.

The Refugee Problem

British sympathy therefore should be directed not to the Czechoslovak State, but to the Czech people and more especially to the 50,000 German Democrats who escaped from the Sudeten areas before the Nazis arrived. The Munich agreement, which was vague about most details, at least made it clear that both Germans and Czechs should have the right to opt between the Third Reich and Czechoslovakia for a period of six months. This right is being challenged by the Nazis, and the Czech Government, unable to accept the responsibility of a German minority, has now admitted in conversation with Sir Neill Malcolm, the League Commissioner for refugees, that it cannot offer much resistance to Hitler's claim that every German should be handed back to him. Though we cannot do much to atone for our betrayal, we can at least ask that the Munich agreement should be kept and that Germans who can look forward to nothing except a concentration camp in the Third Reich, should be permitted to emigrate where they will. Already 25,000 of these unfortunates have been sent back to Germany; it may not yet be too late to rescue some of these refugees. Meanwhile the Lord Mayor's Fund, supplemented by funds collected by the *News Chronicle* and *Manchester Guardian*, is being used for purposes of immediate relief.

Jugoslavia

The full effects of the French collapse have not yet been felt in the Balkans, but it is already clear that Stoyadinovitch, who three weeks ago could scarcely maintain his pro-German policy against the will of both Serbs and Croats, is now strong enough to enforce his

will. The Serbian Opposition, which since the war has been passionately pro-French, was converted overnight to a bitter hatred of France and may now look to Russia for assistance. The Croatian peasants, led by Matchek, are Democrats and have hitherto put their trust in the Western Powers. Now it is doubtful whether Matchek can hold his Party together, and it is possible that the insignificant Croatian Separatists, who have long subsisted on Government funds, may find fresh support among the disillusioned Democrats and swing them into support of Stoyadinovitch. If this occurs, a Fascist regime under German control is probable.

Hungary's Claims

While the International Commission in Berlin obediently registers Germany's decisions in respect to the dismemberment of Bohemia, the Czech Government has had to deal with the territorial demands of Poland and Hungary. The Polish occupation of Teschen, including the important railway junction at Bohumin, was completed on Tuesday, and negotiations have begun with a view to plebiscites in the Spiz, Orawa and Czadecki areas. Hungarian troops have been allowed to enter two towns in Slovakia as a token that the principle of cession of predominantly Magyar territory is accepted, but the talks proceeding at Komarno have temporarily reached a deadlock as a result of the extravagance of Hungary's claims. The Hungarian delegation is reported to have demanded, first, that the 1910 census should be the basis for determining Magyar districts, and secondly, that Ruthenia should be ceded to Hungary as a whole. This revision of the map, which would give Hungary and Poland a common frontier, is supported strongly by Warsaw and—with visibly decreasing enthusiasm—by Rome. It is significant, however, that, so far as Ruthenia is concerned, the claims of the Duce's *protégés* appear not to have the blessing of Berlin. Germany, it would seem, has no objection to Hungary's annexing her slice of Slovakia, but does not favour any move in the direction of realising Pilsudski's dream of a Polish-Hungarian-Roumanian *bloc* in the path of her expansion to the Black Sea. In the Nazi Government's eastern policy there is room only for satellite States enjoying independence on sufferance.

Herr Funk's Tour

In promoting the commercial side of the *Drang nach Osten*, Herr Funk, the Reich's Minister of Economics, has been a fast worker. He left Berlin on September 18th, proceeded to Belgrade and there arranged for the establishment of a mixed German-Jugoslav committee charged with the task of filling in the details of a new trade agreement which will give Germany a near-monopoly in Jugoslavia's foreign commerce. After a farewell speech in which he foreshadowed great road works to be undertaken in Croatia with German co-operation, Herr Funk winged his way to Angora. The fruits of his visit were a commercial pact under which Turkey is accorded a credit of £12,500,000 by Germany—the proceeds to be used for constructing, under German supervision, new docks in the Bosphorus and a number of large industrial plants in Anatolia. In return, Germany secures an extended barter agreement with Turkey, giving her the lion's share of Turkish import-export trade. Sofia is the next stop in this triumphant progress. Here the task will be easy for Herr Funk, since Bulgaria is already completely dependent on the German market. The final stage in this so far successful essay in high-speed commercial diplomacy will be reached, sooner or later, in Bucharest. If Herr Funk can bring off a deal which gives Germany a monopoly over Roumania's oil supplies, with German engineers to screw up the present flagging rate of output, Hitler's ability to snap his fingers at sea-power will be unquestionable.

Mussolini and the Spanish War

Diplomatic talks in Rome do not appear to have brought us much nearer to a settlement of Anglo-Italian relations. Mussolini is chafing at the delay over the coming into force of his Pact with Mr. Chamberlain, which, it was made clear, must be preceded by a withdrawal of his troops from Spain. He is prepared to withdraw some thousands—ten thousand maybe—of the Italian infantry who are serving under General Franco; he shows no intention of recalling the whole—or the really important part, airmen and technicians—of his "volunteers." That obviously will not do. The understanding was that withdrawals from either side should be in proportion, and now that the Spanish Government is not only ready to disband, but is actually disbanding, all its foreign soldiers, the proposed "token" withdrawal of Mussolini's ten thousand is a token merely of a fraud. Meanwhile the advocates of "mediation" between the Government and the rebels (who include many honest well-wishers to Spain) are making their voices heard. Neither Barcelona nor Burgos, however, seems disposed to listen to them. Strong protests indeed have come from both. The rebels say they will have no "Devil's truces." The Republicans, who have fought so desperately and so long for the freedom and integrity of their country, are indignant at what they regard as plans for selling out Spain as Czechoslovakia was sold.

The Palestine Rebellion

The increasing disorders and bloodshed and the breakdown of the civil administration in Palestine have driven the British Government to stronger action. But the dispatch of bigger reinforcements will not in itself dispose of the problem of Palestine. The Government must decide on a policy—and that without delay. They are faced by peremptory demands from the Arab side for the abandonment of the Mandate and the Balfour Declaration, and by insistence from the other side that we shall stand by our solemn pledges—as well as by our Imperial interests. We hope that it is still possible to find a solution acceptable to both parties. The plan put by the Iraqi Foreign Minister before Mr. MacDonald last week does not appear very helpful; it gives the Arabs the substance of their claims and the Zionists hardly the shadow of theirs. As for Partition, it looks to-day more difficult than ever to carry out. We are told that behind the shouting and the shooting there are serious discussions of a plan which would establish, with the co-operation of France and Britain, a federation of Arab States (Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan) and secure within it a position for the Jews that would satisfy their legitimate

claims. If we could really count on good will and moderation on the part of both Jews and the great body of Arabs, this might well prove the best solution of more than one problem in the Middle East.

London's Defences

Gas masks mouldering in cupboards, half-finished trenches water-logged and crumbling in the parks are all that is left to remind Londoners of the pathetically inadequate air raid precautions improvised a fortnight ago at the eleventh hour of emergency. Over the future of A.R.P. in the Metropolis hangs a mist of governmental indecision. Are trenches to be regarded as a prime factor in civilian protection (in which case they should be completed, concreted and made permanent), or are they only a *pis aller*, pending the construction of much more costly underground public shelters? Nobody knows. Nor is there any indication that the Government is alive to the gravity of the problems of feeding, water supplies and sanitation which the (luckily unexecuted) evacuation scheme would have involved. If anything like one-third of the population of London is to be distributed over the countryside in the event of war, haphazard billeting will not meet the case; accommodation will have to be built for the purpose. Equally clear is it that much more drastic steps will have to be taken, not merely in London but in all congested centres, to ensure that local authorities —if responsibility for A.R.P. is still to rest with them— play their part without undue regard for ratepayers' susceptibilities. The best course would probably be to make " passive " defence a national charge under a special centralised Department of State.

The St. Pancras Strike

The strike of porters and other railway workers at St. Pancras and Euston may very possibly have been settled before these words appear in print. The trouble turns upon a single man—a ticket-collector who is not an objector to Trade Unionism on principle, but a lapsed member of the N.U.R. It is often difficult for those who are unfamiliar with Trade Unionism to understand why hundreds or even thousands of men, sometimes in violation of agreements and contrary to the advice of their official leaders, should come out on strike merely because a single fellow-employee refuses to pay his weekly contributions. But Trade Unionists are apt to feel strongly that everyone who shares in the advantages achieved by collective bargaining should both meet his share of the cost and take his place in the organisation which exists to ensure the observance as well as the making of the collective bargain. Where a man has a real objection to Trade Unionism, on grounds of conscience, a way round can usually be found; but when a man who has been a member lapses, either out of unwillingness to pay or because of some quarrel with his fellow-workers, feeling easily mounts, and the due observance of rules of procedure is forgotten in pursuit of the principle of Trade Union solidarity. Usually, a simple solution is found in the end by the defaulter agreeing to pay up; and we hope this will happen in the present case before there has been time for the unofficial strike to upset the relations either between the strikers and their Union or between the Union and the L.M.S.

The Farmers' Demands

The National Farmers' Union has issued this week what is in effect a demand for a system of guaranteed prices for all types of agricultural produce. The Union, dissatisfied with the existing arrangements for price guarantees for wheat, oats, barley and bacon pigs, wants the Government to establish an independent body, on the lines of the Import Duties Advisory Committee, to fix and adjust minimum prices in the light of changing costs of production; and it also demands quantitative regulation of imports, or, if these two concessions are not granted, a revision of trade agreements followed by the imposition of import duties on all types of agricultural products, from whatever source. These demands are supported both by the argument from rural depopulation and the decline in the cultivated areas, and on the plea of national emergency, calling for a larger home production of foodstuffs in view of the danger of war. The N.F.U. manifesto appears to recognise that the case for expanded agricultural production rests largely on the capacity of the farming industry to increase the supply of the more highly priced, specialist products, such as milk, eggs and fruit. But its concrete proposals seem more calculated to lead to a development of the ordinary standard crops, which could be made remunerative on an extended scale only by means of subsidies that might prove very costly.

Mr. Roosevelt Looks to England

The partial revival of business in the United States has already led to the threat of widespread industrial troubles. The railroads, which are trying to find a way of escape from their financial difficulties by making a cut of 15 per cent. in wages, are met with a firm refusal by the Railroad Brotherhoods and the other Unions involved. In large-scale industry the Committee for Industrial Organisation, which has been content during the slump with merely holding its gains, is waking up and projecting a fresh offensive against the " economic royalists." But for the unhealed quarrel between the C.I.O. and its other rival, the American Federation of Labor, there would be every reason to expect a general labour offensive. Mr. Roosevelt, friendly on the whole to the C.I.O., because its enemies are also his, is adjuring the rival Union bodies to compose their differences, which seriously obstruct the smooth working of the new Labor Relations Act; and is urging the employers to accept pacific schemes of collective bargaining and conciliations analogous to those which exist in the main British industries. The big employers, however, stand aloof, encouraged by the split between the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O., and hopeful of smashing the new Unionism with the assistance of the old.

Next week's NEW STATESMAN AND NATION will contain an Autumn Books Supplement. This will include a specially selected list of forthcoming books, a poem by R. C. Trevelyan, and articles and reviews by Elizabeth Bowen, Leonard Woolf, Rose Macaulay, Eileen Power, John Betjeman, C. E. M. Joad, Humphrey House, A. L. Rowse, K. John, V. Sackville-West.

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STOCK-TAKING

WE in Britain face a new situation. An insular people, long confident in our natural frontier, our wealth, our homogeneous population, and our naval strength, we have learned to think of ourselves as providentially a free nation, sufficient guardians of our own Empire and decisive allies whenever idealism coupled with self-interest caused us to take a part in Continental affairs. When Hitler complained that we still talked like the governess of Europe his gibe had more point than we care to admit. In its context it was dishonest nonsense, because our protests about the treatment of the unhappy refugees from the Sudeten areas was no interference in the politics of another country, but a cry of horror and remorse at the realisation of the full consequences of a barbarity in which we are the accomplices. But, speaking generally, it is true that British people must face the unpleasant fact that they are no longer in a position to insist on their ideas of justice and democracy in Europe or the Far East, or even for that matter to protect their own interests. We have lost that right, partly because we failed to do justice to democratic Germany when we had the chance of doing it voluntarily, and partly because the Governments of Britain and France have destroyed the League, which was the only instrument which could have prevented the naked rule of force in Europe, and also their only means of national security.

For seven years now those who have understood have continually urged, without effect on minds steeped in traditional habits, that the League was no piece of idealistic nonsense, but the one practical means of self-defence. Even to-day how many Conservatives listening to confessions of national weakness from Ministers of State draw any moral except that we need more armaments? Some of them may have remembered that in 1935 Sir Samuel Hoare's famous speech at the League Assembly rallied in a common front against aggression more than forty States, and that even three weeks ago we had on one side, if the Government had wished to stand for an ordered settlement, the Czech army (as large as and better equipped than the regular German army), the great Russian air force, the prospect of at least the economic co-operation of the United States and the certainty that countries like Poland and Jugoslavia, which must now fall into the German orbit, were at any rate more on our side than against us. No doubt those who have derided the idea of collective security have also reflected that Russia, deliberately cold-shouldered during this crisis, will certainly hesitate to range herself again with the Western democracies, while the great resources of Czechoslovakia are not merely neutralised, but added to the power of Germany. Perhaps they also realise that the threat of a naval blockade, which won the last war and had its effect on the German General Staff a fortnight ago, has lost its potency now that Hitler has within his grasp the vast resources of South-East Europe. For those who are considering the future of British foreign policy these facts are more important than the inferiority of the British and French air forces in comparison with Germany's.

It is well clearly to face the change in our position so that we may think anew, realising that we are no longer "the greatest Power in the world," that it is highly dubious whether we can maintain our far-flung Empire or our standard of life, and that it is calculation, not bombast, on Hitler's part when he presumes to name Mr. Churchill, Mr. Eden and Mr. Duff Cooper as unsuitable members of a British Cabinet. To many this is not the whole or even the worst part of the tragedy. Those of us who are old enough to have been in the last war and lucky enough to have survived it, were conscious of one great aim at its conclusion. We all said "never again," but we knew that our task was not merely to keep ourselves out of war, but to end the anarchy of nations that made wars inevitable. I need not again recount the steps by which this great endeavour has been brought to nought by British-French policy in China, Abyssinia, Spain and Czechoslovakia. At each crisis the difficulty of preventing the rule of force without ourselves resorting to war has grown greater; now it has been altogether abandoned. To-day we must admit failure and face the facts of Hitler's hegemony in Europe, of the tragic weakness of French democracy and of the implied threat to British independence. The events of the last fortnight have transformed the position of Britain in the world and they must necessarily change our national outlook. The sooner we make the necessary adjustment the better. If we do not appreciate our new position and resolutely face its causes and its consequences, the humiliation to our pride may yet drive us into a war without allies, without probability of victory and for an object that is without meaning to common people or to civilisation.

This does not mean that we must surrender the ideals for which we stand in the world nor accept the kind of vassalage that Hitler may hope to impose on a complacent Britain. It means that if Hitler grants us a short breathing space we shall waste it if our only notion of security is to redouble our air force. The essential fact is that we have failed during the last seven years not for lack of power, but for lack of will and understanding. If the public discovered last week that our armaments and, above all, our defence against air attack were completely inadequate that was not because we had not spent vast sums of money on rearmament. It was because we had allowed democracy to degenerate into a synonym for inefficiency and freedom to become the equivalent of servility to vested interests. It was because our statesmen had no notion of checking profits, no conception except *laisser faire* and "business as usual." We have followed the lunatic policy of attempting to maintain a vast Empire, while abandoning the freedom of trade which had made it tolerable to other Powers in the past and at the same time deserting the allies who relied on us and whose help we now sorely need. Instead of resolutely reforming our administrative and parliamentary system, we have been content to muddle along. We have altogether lacked leaders with the courage to say unpopular things and trust the public to understand and respond. It has not been the fault of the common people, but of rickety institutions and of narrow and class-bound statesmanship. If democrats do not tackle these problems now, we may soon find them tackled by people who care nothing for freedom or democracy.

To-day there is no easy remedy or assurance of success. We have to reconstruct our national life and make up our minds in our weakened position for what and where we stand as a nation. It would be comfortable, God knows, to think that Mr. Chamberlain's hopes of conciliating the dictators would be fulfilled. If Hitler seriously means to

begin disarming, we shall all rejoice. But Mr. Chamberlain's method of approach has not been a promising one. To have abandoned traditional methods of diplomacy and to establish direct contact with the dictators is certainly commendable, but to do so without making any stand for principle is disastrous. He approaches the dictators, not as the leader of a democratic nation, championing the cause of victims of aggression, but rather in the manner of a wealthy man who fears blackmail and who hopes to escape at the expense of weaker neighbours. The Führer has dealt with many such clients in his extraordinary career. We are reminded of a remark of Hitler's, quoted in a recent book by one of his intimate associates, that it was always good policy "to be polite to enemies until you were ready to destroy them." His speech at Saarbrücken suggests that he has ceased to think the politeness necessary.

It would be well to return to principle, to see what commitments we have, what promises we have made, and whether we mean to adhere to either one or the other. It would be both right and expedient to abandon the policy of Ottawa and to apply the principle of the international mandate to our Colonial Empire. The effect of such a step upon Hitler is not so certain now as it would have been three years ago, but it would still deprive him of one of his best propaganda weapons, and it would show America and other potentially friendly countries that we were not, after all, entirely hypocritical when Sir Samuel Hoare made his famous promise at Geneva. Whether Hitler will come to an economic conference or not, we should at once enter into the closest economic relations possible with America, the Scandinavian countries, France, Russia and such other countries as care to come into an economic union. On this point Mr. Amery made some wise remarks in the House of Commons. He said that in addition to rearmament, there were "long-range needs no less important if the defence of our freedom is to rest upon a sound foundation":

> We need a far bolder policy of national health, of nutrition, of encouragement of family life. We may have to recast much of our economic system so as to afford better opportunities, greater security, more social justice for all. Again, can we hope to sustain indefinitely our immense responsibilities on the narrow basis of this little Island? Surely we must seek a wider foundation in the mutual co-operation and mutual development of the group of freedom-loving nations which constitute our commonwealth, and I hope we may also be able to secure such co-operation with the United States and with any other freedom-loving nation which cares to work with us.

On such lines there is hope of reviving a Britain not so much as a Great Power, but rather as a bastion of liberty in Western Europe.

Mr. Churchill describes the Munich ultimatum as "complete defeat," and prophecies the end of our elementary liberties at the dictation of the Führer. But Hitler is not eternal, nor will the people of Europe always accept the domination of Fascism. Nor does defeat necessarily mean disaster. One recalls that the most humiliating treaty of modern times, that made by Lenin at Brest Litovsk with the Germans, proved to be a victory for the ideas which Lenin lived to serve. He had the realism to see that to lose vast tracts of territory mattered comparatively little, because, whatever the material sacrifices, the idea for which he stood would live and triumph. Those of us who will not bow before the new Fascist doctrines of hatred and cruelty may learn a lesson from Lenin. If we have courage we may still maintain the ideals of freedom unimpaired in Britain, and in the long run regard the present defeat as the beginning of a renaissance.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

THE SOUTH YANGTZE FRONT

IT took me 20 hours to reach Changsha—a long dusty slow journey during which the train sat for interminable periods in sidings whilst one amused oneself watching the soldiers in goods waggons alongside, the munition trains and the villagers, and thanked one's luck that no Japanese planes were out bombing the line that day. From Changsha I travelled by road on an ambulance truck with Dr. Lim, chief of the Chinese Red Cross Medical Relief Commission, one other doctor also qualified abroad, and a kind of boy scout as well as the driver. They were all going up to inspect the collecting stations for the wounded behind the front, with a view to sending up some of the first-aid volunteers to whom they have given an intensive four weeks course of practical training at their school in Changsha. China's Army Medical Corps is at about the same stage of development as ours before the Crimean War, or in other words, it is a part of the army's organisation which has not been modernised and remains for the most part in the War Lord phase. Nevertheless, things have improved a little already owing to the valiant efforts made by Dr. Lim and his Red Cross organisation and by certain Army Medical Doctors with whom he works in collaboration. Their aim is to extend and improve the Army Medical Service by training educated young men and sending them into the Army hospitals and to the field dressing stations. They also aim at taking out a number of the existing personnel and giving them a few weeks' training. The Chinese Red Cross has also already got 58 field ambulance units, maintained in the main by the contributions of overseas Chinese, but the number is pitifully small in view of the tremendous number of wounded in this war. Already, too, the Red Cross has vastly improved a few of the base hospitals by attaching their doctors and nurses to them, and if only there were more funds available it could do much more.

On the evening of the day following our arrival at Nanchang we left for the front—or near-front—after experiencing a terrible air raid that morning. For hours we drove north along the highroad, passing trucks carrying supplies up to the front, long files of baggage horses, companies of soldiers, and coolies carrying heavy loads. At about 10.30 we halted at a river and waited two hours, sitting on the sands, for our turn to cross over on a primitive wooden ferry boat which takes one truck or a load of horses at a time. For men there is a bridge of boats to walk over. Here in the moonlight, watching the pack animals being urged on to the ferry boat with shouts and cries, and thinking that in some such fashion must Xenophon and his Ten Thousand have crossed the rivers of Asia Minor, I suddenly heard a voice speaking to me in perfect French. A young Chinese officer who had read in the papers that I was visiting the front, introduced himself as Colonel Mok and asked me if I should not like to visit the Cantonese troops at the front commanded by General Lu Han-yuen. This was just the opportunity I had been looking for, and we arranged that he should take me there.

The collecting stations I visited that night were the grimmest sight I have yet seen. At best ancient houses, at worst mere bamboo shelters, they provided nothing but a shelter and some food. By the light of a torch Drs. Lim and Jung went from wounded soldier to wounded soldier lying either on bare boards or on the earthen floor. They had been bandaged after a fashion, but there was no one there to give them medical attention, to nurse them, or even to give them a drink. Those who survive until they arrive at a hospital usually have worms in their wounds and many die of gangrene from comparatively slight wounds. The stoicism of these men was extraordinary—

no groans or cries, although most of them lay sleepless in pain through the night. Sometimes one of them would say to the doctor: "There is no hope for me, my wound is too bad." But that was all. One knew that those with bad abdominal or head wounds would surely die before they could get transported to a hospital and I wished one could paint the scene for people in England and America. What a difference a few trucks would make, a few trained nurses, a little morphia to dull the pain!

That night was a revelation to me of the stoicism of the Chinese soldier, and in spite of the horror which is unforgettable I was glad to be with those doctors that night. The very fact that men like these, who could have been earning comfortable livings abroad or in the Treaty Ports (Dr. Lim had the offer of a lectureship at Edinburgh), were instead cleaning out the Augean stables of the Chinese Medical Service, teaching young men and women to nurse the wounded, trying to get real surgeons to go and work in the Army hospitals, and themselves living without comforts on the tiniest salaries—all this made up for the callousness of other Chinese and gave one the hope that the wounded would soon get better care. I have already pleaded for help for the Chinese Red Cross Medical Commission, for it is pitifully short and can therefore as yet only touch the fringe of the problem. The Chinese Government, forced to spend all its resources on arms, having also to cope with the colossal problem of feeding the millions of refugees, cannot provide the funds to import trucks for transporting the wounded. I say trucks, for proper ambulances are a luxury too dear, and many trucks could save many wounded whilst a few ambulances would be insufficient.

By three o'clock that afternoon I was on a truck returning to the front, this time in broad daylight without the comforting assurance that the Japanese planes cannot bomb or machine-gun you by night. By nightfall I had reached the end of the road and here we had to take off our shoes and wade across a lake, for the Japanese had destroyed the bridge. Four days later when I returned there was, however, a causeway made of sandbags covered with earth. That night I slept at the Communications Department office—a farmhouse with table, a telephone ringing all night, and plank beds round the walls. Knowing no Chinese I could only speak with gestures, but I managed to get Colonel Mok by telephone and knew he would send some soldiers to fetch me next morning. I set off, after my first night on a board bed, to walk the ten miles to the headquarters of the general commanding the whole of this area. My soldier escort set a terrific pace, for the danger from Japanese planes is constant. We passed file after file of coolies carrying food and ammunition to the front, and many stretcher bearers taking wounded down from the battle then proceeding some sixteen miles away. The path was so narrow that one had to step into the grass to pass the slowly moving carriers. But there were a comforting number of trees and ditches along the way to hide in if planes should appear. Somehow or other I kept up with the two soldiers in that burning sun, and was astonished to find that it was not really so exhausting. Arrived at General Wu's I was given tinned pineapple and tea and inspected a pile of rifles, machine-guns, flags and gas masks captured from the Japanese the day before.

The general's headquarters was an abandoned farmhouse well hidden amongst the trees, and although the Japanese planes came burring overhead every two or three hours one did not feel very alarmed. All the bits of washing drying outside would be hastily dragged in, but otherwise not much notice was taken. A bomb would be dropped here and there, and anyone on the pathway who did not hide might be killed, but an army cannot be defeated by airplanes.

The farmhouse had been occupied by some peasants who had escaped with the army from near Kiukiang, and these were bringing in the abundant rice harvest. General Li sat at his deal table in his shirt sleeves, a telephone beside him, directing the battle then proceeding for one of the hills on which the Chinese defence force is established. Chickens ran around his feet and behind him was his plank bed covered by a mosquito net. Higher up the room was his chief of staff with a table and a bed, and beyond were other doorless rooms with more officers and soldiers. The whole atmosphere was extraordinarily democratic and informal and altogether pleasant. Soldiers and officers are hardly to be distinguished, but the staff officers seemed to be the ones who went about in their sleeveless vests—except when one took their photographs, when they put on cheap cotton khaki tunics without badges of rank. Ordinary soldiers had a more soldierly appearance, and they wore puttees on the march over their naked sunburnt legs. Officers of the line seemed to wear slacks for the most part. When General Li went out into the farmyard he would be saluted by a shout, but one felt this was done more out of affection than from the necessities of discipline.

Whilst I was there things were going well for the Chinese troops, and officers coming in for an hour or two from the battle line would speak with elation of the declining morale of the Japanese troops, who, they insisted, were now far less formidable enemies than a few months ago. The headquarters was full of diaries and letters taken from captured or killed Japanese, and these bore witness to the war weariness of the Imperial Army, which, as one Japanese officer expressed it, was far more weary than the Chinese. The geographical position of the defence along their line of hills was excellent, and I left with the distinct impression that if the defence of Hankow depended on the Chinese armies alone the Japanese would not take it. The danger is always in the rear and in particular in certain elements in the Kuomintang, which despairing of foreign aid and appalled at the destruction of wealth and loss of revenue, may at some time want to compromise with the Japanese. No one, however, believes that the Generalissimo will compromise, so that the war will go on even if Hankow falls.

Failing to break through the Chinese defences the Japanese are, at the time of writing, once more concentrating on the mass bombing of cities in order to try to break the morale of the civilian population and disorganise the rear of the Chinese armies. It is unlikely that they will succeed; but a little help from us at this juncture would make all the difference. It was strange to hear General Li talking of China's struggle as part of the world's struggle against aggression—strange because there in that farmhouse behind the Chinese lines Europe and the United States seemed incredibly distant and remote. To General Li and his staff, however, the visit even of a journalist was warmly welcomed, as showing that the distant world of the West was taking some interest in China's heroic struggle. When I left he presented me with a Japanese sword with three gold chrysanthemums on the hilt—a real honour and very generous, since it had been captured from the Doihara division on the Lunghai railway in May and he must have been carrying it round as a special trophy. There were plenty of other swords taken in the recent fighting, but he gave me the best. With my sword and my bedding I departed on horseback in the afternoon. By evening I was at the ford and by 7 o'clock was on a lorry returning to Nanchang, which I reached in the early hours of the morning. After three hours sleep I was awakened at 5.30 by an air raid and felt much worse in the hotel than I had done at the front. For in the open one has less fear than where there are walls to fall upon you.

FREDA UTLEY

GERMANY'S CZECH COLONY

THE British and French Premiers, still less their advisers, could never have realised what they were giving to Herr Hitler when they handed him Czechoslovakia. For, make no mistake, the whole of Czechoslovakia, even the portions already torn off by Poland and Hungary, lies henceforth directly or indirectly in the economic grip of Germany. So much, indeed, can we learn from the formation of the new "Czechoslovak" Cabinet, an Agrarian Right-wing crypto-Fascist affair; from that Cabinet's resistance, supported by Berlin, to the junction of Hungary with Poland over Ruthenia;

and from the German demand for a customs and currency union with the new "Czechoslovak State." Let us put aside political considerations, and assess the economic gains to Germany, the economic capacity for life of the new State, the economic effects of the Munich agreement upon Europe and ourselves.

First, Germany, with the connivance of the British and French Ambassadors in Berlin, has already annexed more territory than was claimed in the Godesberg ultimatum. (Strangely enough, their Italian colleague on the International Commission set up at Munich, Signor Attolico, has stood out alone for strict fairness to the Czechs!) With it have gone 800,000 Czechs; so that, out of a former State with 3,250,000 German-speaking people in just over 14,000,000, we now see less than 9,000,000 left after the Poles and Magyars have had their way; and of these 9,000,000, which include refugees many of whom will yet go back to "foreign" lands, barely 1,500,000 will be dependent on industry. The new Czecho-slovakia, even if there is any "Slovakia" to it at all, will be, instead of the former finely balanced economy between agriculture and industry, a predominantly agrarian country—and that dependent on the worst lands in the former Republic. For Germany and Hungary and Poland take the best lands in the river valleys, the forests and the industries.

Secondly, then, about 9,000,000 people (again on the assumption that a Slovakia is left) will be herded into closer confines, without basic industries, with the most barren lands, with virtually no coal or coke, and little lignite, and unable to communicate across the corrugated north to south ranges of hills and mountains except by roads and railways that pass—at the lowest estimate, according to the latest German annexations—twice through foreign territory. Consider the significance of this fact: M. Preiss, of the Zivnostenska Banka in Prague, the largest agrarian bank and directed by Agrarians of the Right-wing kind, went to Berlin last week partly to attempt to retain, in the new State, the coal mines of Brüx and various other mineral resources. In exchange, it is reported, he offered the resignation of M. Benes. Now, despite Godesberg and Munich and the sweet-sounding International Commission of Ambassadors at Berlin (in whose terms of reference come "all questions which may arise out of the transfer of the territory"), about 50 per cent. of former Czechoslovakia's productive forces (measured in h.p. of motors, factories, etc.) has gone to Germany, and almost 90 per cent. of its fuel resources of all kinds has gone either to Germany or Poland. Moreover, the glass, textile and paper industries have lost half their factories and workers; about 40 per cent. of the industry turning out engines and motors of all kinds is now German; and the range of losses exceeding 25 per cent. of former Czechoslovakia's industrial branches extends through metallurgical and machine-making, chemicals, leather, timber, foodstuffs, construction, small engineering, and clothing.

Now, thirdly, the foreign trading position of the new State is already hopeless apart from trade with Germany. To that extent, and in addition because the new Prague Cabinet is necessarily orientated towards Berlin in aim and sympathy, not only is the British Government's "advance" of £10,000,000 to Prague economic nonsense. (Relief of refugees is a separate problem which must be privately undertaken on the lines of the Hoover or Quakers' relief system, and in no way left to the "discretion" of a Government controlled by Germany.) Indeed it is going to work out to the indirect subsidisation of Czech-German economic relations; to ease the path of German exploitation; and to provide a nest-egg of foreign exchange for the inevitable customs and currency union between Germany and the new, undelimited State. It follows that not one penny piece should in future be pledged to "Czechoslovakia." No such independent State can exist; even if it is not completely absorbed, it must be economically within the German trading and currency system. That system only needed to incorporate the Czechoslovak regions to begin a rapid extension over all of Eastern, Central and Balkan Europe as far as Turkey and the Near East. So much can be seen from Herr Funk's current tour, which began, on sudden instructions, on September 18th, on the assumption that Czechoslovakia would fall to Germany within a few days. The new Czech State, bereft of its fuel and mineral and timber resources, retaining its lamed industries within a few kilometres of indefensible frontiers, without an army and defensible munition works, incensed against France and Britain, has neither the possibility nor even the desire to strive for economic or political independence of Germany.

This is the measure of what has been lost to Western Europe at Munich. It is this, as well as the direct and indirect control of new armament, metal, engineering and fuel resources amounting to one-third of old Germany's—i.e., before the incorporation of Austria's resources—total production last year, which counts. It is not so much the surrender, at the British and French commands, to Germany of about £180,000,000 worth of fortifications, armaments, Czech factories and buildings, roads, railways, mines, etc.; these are capital goods, newly equipped since 1918, and now fall, together with the Sudetenland's German factories to which Germany might have had a justifiable claim, to Germany. But if to all that we add the entire productive capacity of the lamed State, unable to exist alone henceforth, and equally unable to function in a non-German direction, the resultant is a chastening reflection. One small example: the new State has lost almost 50 per cent. of its export capacity, because the remaining industries will now have to import virtually the whole of their raw material and fuel from "foreign" territory which was once Czech, Slovak or Silesian; and how can it pay its way, or build new railways and set up new factories (as many glib English experts seem to think a possibility), without putting every newly invested Kc. (or, rather, pfennig) into German control? Not even the interior communications of the new State can be guaranteed without German compliance.

Finally, we may look at a wider canvas. Signor Mussolini is credited—and the decent behaviour of his Ambassador in Berlin confirms it—with wanting to join Poland, Hungary and Jugoslavia together across a Hungarian-owned Ruthenia, as a *cordon sanitaire* against Germany. This construction, the dream of Poland's Colonel Beck, is also a piece of sublime mysticism and economic nonsense. For it could be neither militarily defensible, nor economically capable of existence, without the old Czechoslovak industrial power. Now, however, that even the new "Czechoslovakia" is to be utterly controlled by Germany, the possession of Teschen by Poland, and of even all Slovakia and Ruthenia by Hungary, would not compensate for the ability of such a *bloc* to attack Germany, now lost, nor for the industrial weakness of such an agrarian bankrupts' parade. The outlook before this kind of *cordon* would have been favourable a few months or even weeks ago, if the British and French industrial and financial resources, linked with their needs of materials and foodstuffs, had been marshalled in a consciously directed plan to organise the economic solidarity of all States beyond Germany, from Scandinavia and Poland down to Turkey, Rumania and Greece. A spasmodic gesture in this direction was made in the British negotiations with Turkey and Rumania, and in the French loan to Bulgaria. But the linch-pin of the mechanism was always Czechoslovakia. Once that went, Hungary and Poland became fiefs of Berlin. And now even Turkey has secured German credits amounting to more than the recent British credits.

These facts point to ugly conclusions; but it is no use to evade them. The British £10,000,000 "advance" and the first post-war unilateral British military guarantees of a European frontier are nonsensical, unless they are either to salve the conscience of the British people, or to pull wool over their eyes, or actively to assist Germany in smothering Czechoslovakia. The reason for so hard a saying is simple; the Lord High Chancellor of England said in the Lords last week that the former Czechoslovakia ought not to have come into existence in 1919. Well, if that Czechoslovakia, which

we never guaranteed, was an abortion, an economic monstrosity, an ethnographical slip, then the new and as yet frontierless State, whose ultimate frontiers we have already guaranteed, and whose present frontiers we are "morally bound" to guarantee, is an unspeakable myth. GRAHAM HUTTON

A LONDON DIARY

THERE are still foolish people about who talk of Mr. Chamberlain as if he were a muddle-headed politician with no sense of direction. Do let us get this mistake finally cleared out of the way. Mr. Chamberlain is a tough man who sees very clearly between blinkers. It is his strength that his vision and sympathies are limited. He pursues his chosen path with an astonishing pertinacity, undistracted by popular opinion or emotional complications. It must have taken a lot of courage to dispense with the services of a popular Foreign Minister and, still more, with those of a very able permanent Under-Secretary of State and to carry through to its bitter end a policy which the whole Foreign Office thought as disastrous as it has proved to be. After "promoting" Sir Robert Vansittart to a position of impotence and taking Sir Horace Wilson for his adviser in foreign as in domestic affairs, he set out to purchase British immunity from Fascist wrath by supporting Germany's ambitions in Central Europe and Mussolini's in Spain and Africa. At an age when most men have begun to want comfort, he has taken the whole responsibility of reversing the traditions of British foreign policy on his own shoulders, and the destruction of Austria and Czechoslovakia, though carried out with a thoroughness that he no doubt regrets and with results he did not foresee, are the inevitable, not the accidental, results of his strength and pertinacity.

* * *

I should expect Mr. Chamberlain, like Lord Baldwin, to retire from politics before the laurels are withered on his brow and I suppose he will be succeeded by Sir Samuel Hoare. The Conservative revolt is considerable and there is still talk of a coalition of Churchillian Conservatives, Liberals and Labour men, but the effort to bring this off failed during the week of the Austrian crisis, and though there is much more feeling to-day, I am not at all confident of success now. Labour in the past has been very unwilling to sacrifice its formal independence; to-day I think the obstacle rather comes from the Tories. The evidence that the country does not like the results of Munich grows; the propaganda films are greeted in some places in frozen silence; in others with perfunctory handclapping for Mr. Chamberlain, cheers for Mr. Duff Cooper and boos or laughter (very misplaced) for Mussolini and Hitler. Nevertheless, an election now would probably give Mr. Chamberlain a victory because there is at present no convincing alternative administration.

* * *

Apropos of the cinema propaganda. I take this from the *World's Press News* of October 6th:

> E. W. White, Managing Director of Star Advertising Co., Ltd., made the following authorised statement to "W.P.N." this week:
>
> I have been appointed by a group of Members of the House of Commons to undertake a campaign on behalf of certain Members of the House of Commons to establish Neville Chamberlain in the position he has taken up regarding his foreign policy and also to back him up against his detractors.
>
> Mr. White was formerly with Textophote, Ltd., and was appointed Managing Director of Star Advertising last month.

* * *

To gauge public opinion one has to read a variety of newspapers. The *Times* has become completely partial and propagandist; it even refused a letter from Mr. A. D. Lindsay, the Master of Balliol and Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University. The *Daily Telegraph* is said to have raced ahead in the last fortnight and its leading articles have probably expressed pretty closely the feelings of most members of the propertied class. The *Daily Mirror* has plastered the buses with posters advertising, for the first time, I think, the "sanity" of its leading article—an entirely justifiable claim. The *Week* recently reported that the *Daily Mirror* was rung up by Lord Halifax and changed its anti-Government tone in consequence. I find on enquiry that the first part of this statement is true, but that the *Mirror* completely ignored Lord Halifax's admonition. But when one wants to know which way the wind of public opinion is blowing *Punch* is the best weathercock to consult. It represents the dominant feelings of an important class—the people who live in country houses large or small and who still in the long run exercise much more influence, I think, than might be supposed from their numbers and their wealth. On September 21st, *Punch* printed some verses by Evoe in which he applauded Mr. Chamberlain for "bearding Bismarck in his den." The following week Evoe seems to have lost his temper, as doubtless most of his readers had, and his versification of a *Times* leader was one of the most savage pieces I have ever read in *Punch*:

> Justice alone was yielded
> And everyone was right:
> The sword that Hitler wielded
> Was not the sword of might.
> The French and we were tender
> And took the kindliest course;
> The Czechs did not surrender
> To Fear nor yet to Force.

The poem ends:

> *Lord! I could write a column*
> *Of tripe to this intent,*
> *As smooth—as suave—as solemn—*
> *If England gave up Kent.*

* * *

The refusal to allow Mr. Strachey to enter the United States has naturally roused the wrath of the American Civil Liberties Union. It confirms my impression that the declaration that must be signed by every applicant for an American visa is used somewhat arbitrarily to exclude such people as the authorities do not like. A Communist may sign in all good faith a declaration that he is "not opposed to organised Government" (this would only exclude the revolutionary anarchist) and that he "does not advocate the overthrow of any Government by force." But Mr. Strachey is apparently charged with having falsely declared that he is not and never has been a member of the Communist Party and it is asserted that he was recently elected to the Party Executive. I happen to know that Mr. Strachey was strictly truthful on both points. After leaving first the Labour Party and then the short-lived New Party in 1931, he became a Communist in philosophy, but has never in fact been admitted to membership of the Party. As he is not a member he was not eligible for the Executive. I am told that the error has probably arisen because some local branches at the recent Congress, knowing him to be a prominent Marxist writer nominated him in ignorance that he was not a Party member and that presumably a document, nominating him under this misapprehension, has reached the American Consul. It is suggested that the British authorities, who did not wish him to lecture in the United States, may have had a hand in the matter.

* * *

Those who boast that we have abolished the bad old ideas of Poor Law should be interested in an experience related to me by a city councillor. The Public Assistance Committee of an important city decided that the accommodation in its Poor Law Institutions was inadequate, and in spite of Tory opposition considerable improvements were made. These improvements were financed out of the rates, but some of the cost could be met by the Old Age Pensions of the inmates, who were permitted to keep 2*s*. pocket money, while the remaining 8*s*. went towards the cost of their maintenance. Judge of the Committee's consternation when it received the information that the improvement in the well-being of the inmates would involve the loss of the whole of their pensions. This remarkable decision was based on the principle that the amount payable in Old Age Pensions varies according to the income of the recipient. Each extra £10 of private income reduces the pension and the Ministry has decided to treat the maintenance

received in Institutions as private income. Thus the Committee, in order to obtain the pension money, had to keep the inmates of its institutions on a starvation level. Now that it has to treat them decently, it must not only pay out of the rates the increased cost, but forfeit 8s. per head to the Ministry of Health. In short, the humane are penalised and skinflint administration is encouraged by actual financial benefits. More remarkable, this law has been in force for nine years without any public outcry.

* * *

I do not vouch for the truth of this story told me of two small English towns which I will call Blimpton and Lowville. Blimpton, an ancient but small borough, has a long-standing feud with Lowville which has recently, owing to the arrival of an aerodrome, far outstripped it in size and importance. When the emergency came, the councillors of Blimpton found that they had omitted to organise any A.R.P. Not dismayed, they climbed the town gasometer at dead of night and next day there was a notice upon its roof in bold letters which any pilot could read: "2 miles to Lowville." CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Mr. Herbert Tatloch.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

Extracts should not be sent without their context. The article or passage should be sent in full with the proposed excerpt marked.

One result of the cession of the Sudeten Areas of Czechoslovakia to Germany is that Roderich Menzel, the leading lawn tennis player of Czechoslovakia, will be available to Germany for Davis Cup matches.—*Glasgow Evening News.*

I have been wondering how our cats and kittens could show their gratitude to the nation for peace, and it occurs to me that the most delightful way would be to help some children's hospital

Please, all you little fireside cats, as well as pedigree ones, join in and see what we can do for the children to show our gratitude, because had there been a war it is too awful to contemplate what might have happened.—*Fur and Feather.*

"It is my hope," Mr. Chamberlain said, "and I believe, that under the new system of guarantees the new Czechoslovakia will find greater security than she has ever enjoyed in the past."—*Times Ed. Supplement.*

One has heard from many lips during the past critical weeks vehement diatribes against the aeroplane. To those who maintain that the aeroplane is the cause of much unrest in Europe and who deplore its very existence, I suggest that they could not do better than to ponder on the fact that had it not been for the airliner which brought the British Prime Minister face to face with the German Chancellor at a moment when seconds were vital, Europe by now might have been shattered by aerial bombardment.

The aeroplane as an instrument of peace triumphed over the aeroplane as a weapon of war. And in the future it will do likewise.—Letter in *Spectator.*

A picture of a three weeks old frog-mouth owl was replaced by a picture of Mr. Chamberlain.—*Newspaper World.*

THE CRISIS IN RETROSPECT

HANSARD is not always worth sixpence a day, but last week it was. Two shillings for the verbatim report of the four days' debate in the House of Commons is an investment which every serious student of the Crisis should make. When Parliament does well, as it did last week, no summarised report in daily newspapers is adequate.

"I am not quite clear," said Mr. Churchill, in perhaps the best of many good speeches during those four days, "why there was so much danger of Great Britain or France being involved in a war with Germany at this juncture, if, in fact, they were ready all along to sacrifice Czechoslovakia. The terms which the Prime Minister brought back with him could easily have been agreed, I believe, through the ordinary diplomatic channels at any time during the summer. And I believe the Czechs, left to themselves and told they were going to get no help from the Western Powers, would have been able to make better terms."

That is also my opinion. A Czech friend said to me, more than a year ago, "If France and England will only say they don't want to be bothered with us any more, we can make our own terms with Germany." Such terms at that time would, no doubt, have included the abandonment of the French and Soviet Alliances, and perhaps withdrawal from the League, balanced by a very favourable trade treaty and a non-aggression pact. Germany would have paid a good price for the entire output of Skoda and for any available foodstuffs. She would not, I think, have pressed for frontier revision, but would have been content with something less than the Fourth Plan, the Henlein Party entering a Coalition Government at Prague with Czech Agrarians and Slovak Autonomists, and putting the Socialists into opposition.

But ex-President Benes and the Czech parties of the Left continued to put faith in us. "I do not believe there will be war," he had said to me when I last saw him, "but, if war comes, we know that where England is, *there* is victory." He held to that faith, almost to the end.

For those of us who knew and admired Czechoslovakia, and think now of our personal friends out there, deserted and heartbroken, amid the ruins of a State and the massed misery of refugees, funeral orations are only sickening. Czechoslovakia has gone down into the dark with a magnificently civilised gesture. And we, as one of my colleagues said with vehement passion during our interview at the Foreign Office on September 21st, "Lord Halifax, we are ashamed to be Britishers."

It is, in my view, a profound mistake to suppose that British Ministers followed through these months any well-thought-out, far-sighted plan. I see, on the contrary, evidence only of drift and muddle, indecision and incompetence.

At no time was an unambiguous and authoritative warning given to Herr Hitler himself that an attack on Czechoslovakia would be forcibly resisted by Britain, along with other nations. On this point Mr. Duff Cooper's resignation speech in Parliament was detailed, devastating and unanswered.

At no time was any effort made by Britain to rally other Governments—and more than one in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe could almost certainly have been rallied—to join the three great Powers in a straightforward and united declaration of their intentions.

At no time was any definite proposal made by Britain to Germany for an impartial consideration of the Sudeten problem, by arbitration or otherwise, nor was any effort made to interest President Roosevelt in any such procedure.

On the other hand, the lead given by the British Labour Movement through the Crisis was clear, repeated and emphatic. We did our best to stiffen the Government, to shape opinion and to preserve peace without sacrificing the Czechs.

At Blackpool, on September 7th, the three Executives of the Movement agreed, without a dissentient vote, on the terms of the Declaration which the Trades Union Congress accepted next day by an overwhelming majority. We called on the Government "to leave no doubt in the mind of the German Government that they will unite with the French and Soviet Governments to resist any attack on Czechoslovakia." We expressed confidence that "such a policy would have the solid support of the British people." We protested against the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, while welcoming the generous offer made by the Government of Prague to remove all legitimate Sudeten grievances. And we demanded the immediate summoning of Parliament. Had this demand been granted, public opinion, voiced not only by

the Opposition but by Conservative critics, as the debates of last week showed, might have decisively influenced the Government's attitude.

After Blackpool, the National Council of Labour was in almost continuous session. Following the Blackpool Declaration came a number of others, all equally clear, as the situation developed.

In addition to repeated representations made by Mr. Attlee and Mr. Greenwood to the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, the National Council sent three of its members, of whom I was one, to interview the Prime Minister on his return from Berchtesgaden; and the three Executives sent six of their members, of whom again I was one, to see Lord Halifax the night before the Prime Minister went to Godesberg. At both these interviews there was some very plain speaking and many questions put, which were not answered to our satisfaction.

We maintained contacts, through many channels, with the Czechs, the French, the Russians, and the Poles. The National Executive, for instance, invited a Polish and a Czech Socialist to Blackpool, and the National Council first invited representatives of the French Socialist and Trade Union Movements to London, and then sent four of its members, of whom I was one, to Paris. And there was a long series of other contacts, official and unofficial.

The Council also issued, between Godesberg and Munich, an Appeal to the German People, which, we have reason to know, was read and heard by many. I was in a railway carriage on October 2nd with three sailors, one of whom said "I'm a Conservative, but I should like to shake hands with one of those Labour chaps who sent that message to the Germans. I know it got through." Only then did I reveal my politics and my identity.

From the evidence at my disposal, certain striking facts stick out.

The fact that there was no effective personal contact, between September 8th and 23rd, between the British and the Soviet Governments, either in London, Moscow or Geneva.

The fact that British air defences, particularly anti-aircraft guns, are criminally insufficient. What has been done with all the money voted by Parliament for Air Defence?

The fact that Mr. Chamberlain, advised by Sir Horace Wilson—the blind leading the blind—has been conducting our foreign policy, almost without reference to the British Foreign Office. The Prime Minister's lack of information—"The Czechs," he said in his broadcast on September 27th, are "a small nation of whom we know nothing"—the slipshod imprecision of the Munich Agreement, his simple trust in Herr Hitler's assurances, his evident satisfaction with his "man-to-man talks," which he threatens to continue, these are most disconcerting and dangerous symptoms of amateurishness.

"But," it is said, "the only alternative to what he did at Munich was war." To this claim I make the following reply.

First, good judges hold that at Munich the Prime Minister had all the cards in his hand, and simply threw them away; that Herr Hitler at last had seen the red light; that the mobilisation of the British Fleet, the tardy declaration that Britain, France and Russia would support Czechoslovakia if attacked, the consequent weakening of Italy's support, the increasing emphasis of President Roosevelt's appeals, growing American indignation at Herr Hitler's intransigence, and the growing apprehension of the German people at the thought of war, had combined to make Herr Hitler's position impossible, had not Mr. Chamberlain virtually capitulated.

Secondly, even if this view be not accepted, Mr. Chamberlain was responsible for leading us to the brink of war, because he had failed, in all the earlier stages of the affair, to take a firmer and a clearer line.

Thirdly, Mr. Chamberlain, by his own admission, was prepared to go to war for the difference between Godesberg and Munich. And this, as events in Czechoslovakia unroll, is now seen to be no difference at all. He was prepared to lead Britain into war in resistance to German aggression to enforce the Godesberg ultimatum. Had he not been invited to Munich and been there persuaded that Herr Hitler was making important concessions, it would have been war.

Fourthly, by his virtual capitulation at Munich, Mr. Chamberlain has faced this country with a most terrible prospect. He has tilted the balance of European power, military and economic, decisively in Herr Hitler's favour. Failing some miracle of recovery, it will incline more steeply month by month. Details could be multiplied endlessly. But most are summed up in the reduction of Czechoslovakia to the status of a German satellite, and in the establishment of German command of all economic resources from the Rhine to the Ukraine and the prospective elimination of all effective political opposition to Germany in that great area. Germany is acquiring, at high speed, an overpowering strength in the centre of Europe, and it would not be prudent to set any limit to the surrenders *of all kinds*, which may at a very early date be demanded from us and from the French. Herr Hitler's speech at Saarbrücken is a foretaste. Mr. Chamberlain has opened the dykes.

Therefore, we find ourselves in a completely new, and most perilous and disadvantageous, situation. We must all without delay do some fresh thinking.

Do yesterday's wise policies, failure to follow which since 1931 has brought us where we are, still make sense? If not, what others, if any others, will be any better? These, and some kindred questions, call for a cold and shrewd examination.

HUGH DALTON

READY! STEADY! STOP!

"After all, there are no secrets now about what happened in the air and in the mobilisation of our anti-aircraft defences. . . . Who pretends that our anti-aircraft defences were adequately manned or armed? . . . There has been a gross neglect and deficiency in our defences."—Mr. Churchill, House of Commons, October 5th.

GIVE thanks to all who sidetracked war,
To each peacemaking hero,
When every hope appeared to mock,
When pacifism died of shock,
When even the deaf could hear the clock
Already striking zero.

So to Daladier, give thanks,
Give Chamberlain his statue,
To Mussolini, aiding both,
Vote heartfelt thanks, however loath,
For bounding from the undergrowth
To circumvent the *battue*.

For his great part give Benes thanks,
Give Roosevelt acclamation
That Mars is cheated of his feast,
That we ourselves are not deceased,
That Prague has not been made at least
The pyre of Czech cremation.

Thank all who steered our peaceward course
And all who keep it steady,
Thank our own backbone, Britain's boast,
And thank our Navy at its post,
But thank Sir Thomas Inskip most
Because he was not ready.

SAGITTARIUS

THERE AND BACK

A GOOD holiday? No, not quite. A little too stimulating, perhaps, what with newspapers, wireless, and being nearly killed at Kidderminster. We were approaching Kidderminster by car on our way to Liverpool to catch the boat to Ireland when the driver of a motor-coach in front stretched out his right arm and appeared to be waving to us to pass him. My

companion, an elderly, grizzled sanguine man, pressed the accelerator only to find that the road ahead forked, that the motor-coach was turning to the right and that it was almost certain to crush us and crash us into a hitherto unseen lamp-standard. It was too late to draw back, and, blowing his horn furiously, my companion went all out on the accelerator and made for the narrowing space between the bus and the lamp-standard. He won the race by a split second, and had just passed the nose of the coach when, with a loud explosion, a back tyre burst, flung the car at right angles in front of the coach and sent it careering into a hedge. Luckily, the coach-driver had the presence of mind to brake violently and so save our lives by a few inches, and my companion must also have braked hard instinctively, or we should have gone through the hedge into a field. I do not suppose I have had so narrow an escape from death since I went down for the fourth time in the Lagan canal.

Yet all my friend said, when the happy spectators had dispersed, was: "It's funny how one doesn't feel in the least bit frightened at a time like that." I nodded agreement, for I did not wish to damp his high spirits. "A nasty piece of news for the children," he went on; "if they had heard we had both been killed on the first day of our holiday." "Very nasty," I agreed. "Much worse for them than for us," he said gravely. "Oh, infinitely worse," I assented, not without a tinge of bitterness. "Let's go and drown their sorrows in a double whisky."

As a rule, it is pleasant to travel in the company of a brave man, and my friend, Harry, is a particularly brave man; but this year I should have been much happier if I had spent my holiday with a physical and moral coward. It was not much fun, for example, to be in Ireland with a man to whom I had pledged my word that, if war broke out, I should hurry back to London with him by the first boat. Why I pledged my word to him I do not know—weakness of character, I suppose—but he would go to Ireland on no other terms. He had a queer kind of notion that it was his duty to defy Hitler, and that the only place a civilian could defy Hitler in was London. I pointed out to him that it was just as easy, if he wanted to defy Hitler to do this from Cullybackey or Ballybunion or the Macgillicuddy Reeks, but he would have none of it. "One must be in London," he said; "the very fact of one's being there helps to keep up the public morale." I assured him that nothing was less likely to keep up the morale of Londoners than my presence among them during an air-raid. He laughed. "You never know how brave you are," he said, "till the moment comes." And the worst of it was, he was fairly sure the moment was coming.

Every morning he would read half-a-dozen newspapers, and, having read them, would assess the chances of war in terms of betting. "Even money I should say to-day," was his verdict for the first morning or two. By the middle of the week he had come down to "six to four on," and I found him agreeing cordially with a grey-haired Irish doctor in the hotel bar who said: "It's like an operation. There's only one thing to do. Get it over." I had hoped to go to the West for a few days, but, with Harry by this time offering three to one on war to imaginary punters, it seemed absurd not to stay somewhere within reach of an English boat. When at length, after consulting the papers and the wireless but not the astrologers, he announced that the betting on war had now reached five to one on, he added that the best thing we could do was to hurry to Dublin and book our passages to Liverpool.

We spent the night at Newcastle where the news on the wireless seemed very bad. As soon as the news was over, the manager turned the wireless off. Thereupon, a little grey-haired man with a chubby face hurried out of the lounge into the hall, went up to a porter and said: "I wonder if we could have the wireless on again. Just till we hear the Stock Exchange prices." How I envied his interest in life! I, for my part, was feeling gloomy, regarding it as rather ominous that Harry had insisted on stopping for lunch at a place called Toome and that he had brought me to spend the night under the Mourne Mountains. When I pointed out the sinister significance of these names to Harry, he pooh-poohed my superstition and, indeed, seemed to be in higher spirits than he had been in since the tyre burst at Kidderminster. His eyes were bright as he informed the barmaid in the hotel bar that war was all but a certainty. "This," he added, "is the end of Hitler." "He's *for* it," she agreed, with a cheerful wag of the head. "Splendid spirit that barmaid has," said Harry, afterwards. "You'll see everybody will be like that."

By the time we reached Dublin, Harry's price was seven to one on; but as he did not think the war would break out for another day or two he consented to spend a night in Dublin. The next evening we packed our bags and got the car round to take it to the boat. "I'm afraid the boat will be horribly crowded," said Harry. "Everybody will be rushing back to London" Our bags were now in the hall, and we got into the lift to follow them. "The war's been postponed," announced the lift-boy, excitedly, as he closed the gates. "What's that?" said Harry, almost angrily. "They're to have a Four-Power conference to-morrow," said the boy. Harry looked crestfallen. "We must confirm this," he said. "We're just in time for the six o'clock news." So we went and listened to the manager's wireless set, and, having heard the news, sent our bags back to the bedroom and the car back to the garage. Harry, I think, was a little disappointed, but as for me I felt that now at last I might have a few days' real holiday. Harry's price that morning had been ten to one on.

The end of the holiday was slightly marred by a rising gale which threatened to give us an uneasy crossing. "It will blow itself out," said Harry on the Sunday, but, on the contrary, on the Monday it kept blowing itself in. When we went aboard the steamer the steward said: "It won't be very rough till we pass Balbriggan." Harry ate an enormous supper, and we went out for a walk on the deck to see the lights of Dublin Bay. "Ah," said Harry, looking at the swirling waters under the moonlit sky, crossed by racing clouds:

> "The moon is in her summer glow
> But hoarse and high the breezes blow."

"I like this," he went on. "Pity to have to go to bed at all on a night like this." I persuaded him to go to bed, however, as we had to be up by six, and he accompanied me reluctantly to the cabin we shared, humming "O steer my barque to Erin's Isle." We were smoking a last cigarette in our beds when two passengers on the deck stopped for a talk outside our window. "It's a funny thing," one of them said, "my wife gets sick even on the calmest crossing." And he went on telling stories about his wife in which every sentence ended with the word "sick." Then the other man told of four English working-men crossing to Dublin and how three of them were sick but he could see the other man holding himself in by sheer will-power. "Funny thing," he said. "He was all right as long as he was on the ship, but, as soon as he set foot on dry land, he was SICK." "I wish to Heaven they would change the subject," said Harry, blanching, and we could hear someone being very, very sick in the next cabin.

I managed to get asleep at last, but was awakened by a noise that sounded as if a bull were hard at work in a china shop. Something had struck the ship the blow of a lifetime, and crockery was flying. A chair was dancing about the cabin like a chair at a spiritualist seance. My watch, glass, glasses and thriller had been swept on to the floor. I got out of bed to collect them and was flung against the wall. "What's the matter?" said Harry, waking up. "The lurch of the ship," said I, reeling. "Nonsense," said he. "It's the whisky you've taken. This isn't rough. It's practically a lake cruise. I'll pick your things up for you." As he got out of bed, by the mercy of Heaven, the gale struck the ship an even more powerful blow than the last, and Harry was lifted and hurled back on to his bed with his heels in the air. "Yes," he said, as he felt the back of his head, "it's beginning to get roughish."

And the chair danced across the cabin towards him as if to mock him.

When we rose in the morning, the boat was in the Mersey, but the gale, which was said to be blowing at one point at 95 miles an hour, made it impossible to approach the landing stage. For seven or eight hours all we could do was to pace the deck and watch the storm tearing off the surface of the Mersey and flinging it in clouds of spray at the city.

Then in the afternoon came a tender and we were all bundled into it, holding on to each other as it bumped against the boat and heaved over as if about to turn turtle. "Very safe boats, these tenders," said Harry, grabbing for a rail to prevent himself from tumbling into the Mersey. . . .

"Well," said he, as we booked our rooms in a hotel, "it's been a grand holiday. I've enjoyed every minute of it."

It seems to me that it must be pleasant to be a brave man, but I think I shall avoid brave men in future in the holiday season. Y. Y.

Correspondence

FINIS BOHEMIA?

SIR,—Masaryk's country is no more. The boldest dream a statesman ever conceived of a progressive and democratic country based on equality and justice for all has come to an end. There is no place for such a country in the jungle whose name is Europe to-day. It really died with its founder, the dreamer of the "New Europe."

Walt Disney's foolish pigs are dancing and enjoying themselves. Who will fear the wicked wolf? He is just feeding and so there is no immediate danger. They don't realise the wolf-pacifier which promised reasonable safety is now out of order, and their frolic may be cut short any time by a whim of the voracious beast. For his appetite is insatiable, and the more he eats the stronger he gets.

What has happened in Central Europe? The full meaning of the Munich capitulation is gradually dawning even on the most obtuse and uninformed isolationist. The price paid for the possibly brief respite was too high. The immense damage done to British moral prestige throughout the world is bound to have serious repercussions when the immediate relief is gone. Czechoslovakia, from whom a grievous ransom was brutally extorted, will have to change its Hussite slogan "Truth Triumphs" for Macaulay's "Delusion may triumph, but the triumph of delusion is but that of a day." The tribute that was paid to the self-control with which the Czechs faced the mutilation of their country was certainly well-deserved. It is almost impossible for an Englishman to realise what the mighty mountain frontiers of old Bohemia mean to the Bohemian Slavs. They gave them that feeling of inner security and confidence which the sea gives to every Englishman. To be deprived of such a vital element of spiritual balance is the greatest tragedy that can befall a self-respecting nation hemmed in and beset on every side. The humiliating dictate disregarded entirely the Czechoslovak constitution, according to which territorial changes are reserved for the Parliament alone. However, such trifles could not receive consideration from their Excellencies the French and British Ministers in Prague. The Dictator's orders were strict and the time-limit final. Apart from the poor democratic refugees with their bundles—a too familiar sight in this distracted world—the most pathetic spectacle was the retreat of the gallant Czech troops from the barriers and frontiers which their ancestors had successfully defended for more than a thousand years, and which they were not allowed to protect. Besides, they had been eager to lay down their lives for something greater than mere physical frontiers. The soldiers' pale, inscrutable faces did not betray their suppressed emotions. No opinion was expressed by them of the shameful behaviour of their allies.

Anschluss was never among the demands of Sudetic Germans, who only wanted autonomy. The dictatorial decision came upon most of them as a sudden and rather terrifying surprise. The Czechs expected the wisdom of British statesmanship to bring about the longed for reconciliation. Instead, the tricks of ignorant and out-of-date imperialists only succeeded in reproducing another Ulster in the heart of Europe. Nobody can transcend his own limitations. There is some irony in the fact that the Czechs, who have shown incredible patience and benevolence towards their capricious minorities, had to be guided by representatives of just that type of arrogant imperialism which has been notoriously unsuccessful in dealing with racial problems (witness the treatment of the Welsh patriots, the coercion of Ireland, Indian discontent, etc.). Lord Runciman would have to spend at least three years in Czechoslovakia in order to understand the complications of the age-long Czech-German symbiosis. Listening to vociferating propagandists and under the influence of the high-born opponents of Czech democracy, he mistook a passing phase of acute hostility, artificially nourished by paid agitators, for a permanent and apparently insoluble situation. He would have been surprised when shortly after the flight of the ringleaders the Sudetic Party, born of terror and intimidation, collapsed like a house of cards, and there was a general relief throughout the German-speaking districts. An atmosphere for peaceful negotiations was again restored. All hope of a satisfactory solution was, however, frustrated by the fatal English intervention. The most tragic aspect of the bungled solution is the ignorance of the English observers (none of whom had the necessary linguistic equipment or any historical knowledge of the delicate problem on which they were to pass their arbitrary judgment). Their outlook was obviously coloured by Lord Rothermere's and Mr. Garvin's indefatigable campaign, with its unwarrantable denunciation of Czech oppression and imaginary Bolshevism. Who will clear away the mess created by the misdirected efforts of all these political businessmen? Who will give compensation to hundreds of thousands of refugees from the Brown Terror in the plebiscite area, whose flight will conveniently clear the ground of pro-Czech voters? It is sad to listen in these days to scared democratic Germans, who are faced by the terrible dilemma inflicted upon them by their British benefactors; spiritually they are with the Czechs, by language and now also through the ceded territory they form a part of the German nation. You can hear them lamenting: "Um Gotteswillen, mir sind die Tschechen doch viel näher!" Who will find a home for them? The Czechs cannot be expected to create new German settlements in their Czech districts. Their only gain from the present disaster, the creation of a purely national Czechoslovak state, would thus be nullified. German enclaves would soon serve as a welcome pretext for further "liberating" activities.

Deserted by their friends and harassed by the jackals of the German lion, the tough Czechs still have the strength of good conscience to fall back on. They were more pained by the betrayal of their cherished ideals than by any of their heavy losses. These people have always been famous for keeping their faith: *Servant sua pacta Bohemi*. Had France been attacked, the faithful Czechs would have been bled white. That's why France's defection would remain a rankling wound. The most pitiable creatures, however, to be found in Czechoslovakia to-day are the former Francophiles and the devoted band of admirers of the English character. For these enthusiasts of British moral prestige the spectacle of the Premier of the proud Empire acting as errand-boy to an impatient and bullying dictator was more than they could bear.

It is generally believed that Germany could not risk a war yet. In any case, Berlin observers assure us that the first failure was sure to bring about a revolution, and that men above twenty-five could not be trusted with rifles. (Those who cannot read expert German sources should look up Woodside's study, "How Can Germany Make War?" condensed in the *Readers' Digest*, June, 1938). If, however, the two colonial Powers were really afraid of war they were free to make a generous gesture by offering Germany some of her former colonies. It would have been more honest than buying her off with other people's possessions.

The "peacemakers" are congratulating one another, and their ingenuous dupes are soothed by the Führer's promise that this was his "positively last performance." But to sceptical observers it is clear that after the Munich hold-up nothing is safe in international relations. Frontiers are in a state of flux and all treaties may henceforth be regarded as so many scraps of paper. Disruptive forces have been wantonly let loose all over Central Europe, by allowing linguistic uniformity to become a standard for re-mapping Europe. Poland alone has twelve million discontented minorities, and Pangerman dynamite may soon explode in other places under the label of self-determination. The masters of Germany may no more trouble to ask the Western Powers for permission, and who will stop them? The French have foolishly forfeited their Bohemian fortress. Their English allies will have

to replace the thirty-five Czechoslovak divisions. Huge armaments and compulsory military service, which all true-born Britons instinctively abhor, begin to loom distinctly on the horizon. The one man whose brains are equal to the great fight for democracy has left the stage. It is probably fatal to all concerned that Benes had only a small though spirited country behind him.

O. V.

BRITAIN AND GERMANY

SIR,—Might the attitude of the average supporter of Mr. Chamberlain to the Munich agreement be described as follows: "It is true that Mr. Chamberlain has made a concession to Nazi aggression. But not only has he saved peace by so doing, but he has brought home a promise from Herr Hitler to abstain from aggression in the future. The question remains what value is to be attached to this promise. If we believed it entirely, the logical course for us would be to drop our rearmament programme. If we disbelieved it entirely, the logical course would be not only to rearm, but also to seek close military co-operation not only with France but also with Russia and with any other countries in Central and South-Eastern Europe which we could induce to join us. Both these courses are highly distasteful to us. We will therefore half believe and half disbelieve Herr Hitler. We will believe him so far as to consider co-operation with Russia unnecessary. We will disbelieve him so far as to consider further rearmament indispensable." M. SIMON

London.

SIR,—Having been recently afforded an opportunity to hear something of the German point of view in the political situation, there appear to me reasons for taking a more optimistic view of the future than seems to be generally taken at the moment.

It cannot be denied that we hold part responsibility for prolonging the injustices of the Treaty of Versailles, and the relationship between those injustices and the rise of an aggressively nationalistic party in Germany is undoubtedly one of cause and effect. Why then all the indignation and recrimination when we see our chickens come home to roost? Luckily this dangerous phase has passed without an outbreak of hostilities on a large scale. Since we still remain unbombed and ungassed, can we not, before it is too late, cultivate the latent feeling of good will which exists between the people of Germany and ourselves? Nazi policy has reached a turning point, since any future offensive in Europe will be one of naked aggression, and the difficulty which Herr Hitler would have in justifying this in the eyes of his people is surely obvious to him, for all his truculence on the platform. In spite of strained relations the Germans are, on the whole, well disposed towards Great Britain, a sentiment possibly assisted by France in the role of scapegoat, and the present need is to put this feeling to good account. The mistake, as I see it, is to assume that the spirit of aggression rises spontaneously in the German breast. Rather is it a function of her neighbour's attitude towards her, and this supposition raises the hope that Mr. Chamberlain's policy may succeed where all the armed strength of which we are capable would fail—the more so since the post-war neurosis in Germany, a prickly feeling of inferiority with symptoms of heightened self-assertiveness, is now obviously removed. Further, our only chance of halting the vicious circle of armament lies in the direction of conciliation—surely a consideration of some importance. If Herr Hitler's good faith in stating that his territorial needs in Europe are now satisfied is doubted, it can soon be put to the test by his willingness or otherwise to co-operate in a general measure of disarmament.

On the question, which is shortly to be raised, of the return of the former German overseas possessions, it is well to remember that nearly a generation has elapsed since the outbreak of the war. This penalisation is intimately bound up with the question of war guilt, and we would be bold in claiming the divine right to visit the sins of the fathers on the children. R. T. DE GRUCHY

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MINORITIES IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

SIR,—Mr. Ernest Davies' article, "Among Minorities," in your last issue, makes two interesting observations—namely that the Hungarian minorities in Czechoslovakia do not wish to return to Hungary, and that the Ruthenians of Poland are very much dissatisfied with their present lot.

As Director of the Central Bureau of Minorities of Geneva, in this capacity I deal day by day with many of these problems, and I could only add to Mr. Davies' second observation that the suppression of national and racial minorities and the dissatisfaction arising thereof is showing a generally growing tendency all over Europe.

I should not, however, think that Mr. Davies' observation as regards the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia has any real foundation. He says that the complaints of Hungarians in the Republic boil down to the fact that their children are not receiving instruction in their mother-tongue in schools. I believe it would be so much easier to settle what had been neglected twenty years ago—by the right of victors—and to ask Hungarians now—acting on the much-discussed principle of the right of self-determination—whether they wish to remain in Czechoslovakia or would prefer to return to Hungary. I am certain that the Hungarians' decision would be more competent and objective than Mr. Davies' individual observations. GUSTAVE DE KÖVÉR

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A FREE COUNTRY

SIR,—In view of present political trends in this country, readers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION may be interested to know that last week an employee of a well known West End departmental store was told upon dismissal that, in her own time, and in a restaurant outside the store, she had been *overheard* expressing Left-wing political opinions. "Your politics are a disgrace to the store," she was told. "Everyone in ——'s must agree with the Government. We don't want your kind here."

Delation and the suppression of free speech are with us already, it seems. GUY VERNEY

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LABOUR AND THE CRISIS

SIR,—I hope we shall not spend too much of our time in disputes about what Mr. Chamberlain really did last month and what he meant by it. This would be a great pity, for two reasons. Firstly, because, whatever explanation we may give of Mr. Chamberlain's conduct, I do not think we shall be able to prove it to the satisfaction of the general public for a very long time to come. Secondly, because, like all arguments about the responsibility for the past, it takes too much of our attention from the future. If the Opposition is going to wrangle, point by point, about what A ought to have done on the 22nd of September and what B really said to C on the 23rd, it is not going to do itself or the country any good. If it wants to have any influence on the future, or even (if it must) to discredit the Government by the lessons of the past, it had better turn its attention to another point—the state of our defences, especially the defence of civilian from air raids. Here is a matter about which everybody knows something of the Government's failure and neglect. It is an excellent debating point against the Government (better, I think, than the betrayal of Czechoslovakia) and an excellent programme for the Labour Party. It is something more important than that—it is necessary to the safety, not only, of course, of the country, but also of the Party itself.

Most of us presume that President Benes had to resign because Hitler insisted on it; are we going to let Mr. Attlee get into the same position? Hitler thinks, or will think, Mr. Attlee a great deal "redder" than President Benes; he has given us warning at Saarbrücken that even such peace as a Four-Power Pact affords is conditional on Mr. Chamberlain's continuance in office. If we do not create the means of defending against Hitler the British electorate's right of choosing its own Government, then Mr. Attlee will never come into office at all, no matter how many General Elections he may win. It is therefore our interest to demand that this right shall be protected by defensive armaments, provided beforehand by Mr. Chamberlain. I hope Mr. Chamberlain is still enough of a patriot and democrat to be willing to safeguard against Hitler Mr. Attlee's right of becoming Prime Minister. If so—if he provides the air-raid shelters and anti-aircraft guns, and thereby takes the wind out of the Labour Party's sails—then we shall have our defences. If he does not, he will expose the whole population of Great Britain to insecurity; the Opposition will fight a triumphant campaign to remove that

insecurity, and will certainly win a General Election. Hitler might indeed treat a success of this kind as a *casus belli;* but the Opposition will have to take some risk of the kind if it is ever to get power at all.

There may be two objections to all this. One is, that it demands an apparent change in the Labour Party's attitude to armaments: when Labour speakers ask, "Whose fault is it that we have too few air-raid shelters and anti-aircraft guns?" some Conservatives will answer, "Yours." But it should not be difficult to convince the public that the Opposition, which has never had a third of the House of Commons since 1931, could not possibly have prevented the Government from arming if the Government had really wanted to arm. The cat might as well pretend that it could not get out of the larder for fear of the mouse. The other, more serious, objection is, that if we allow or encourage rearmament, we shall find ourselves let in for an imperialist war—that, after refusing to fight for what should and probably could have been defended, the Government may call upon us to fight for what cannot and should not. That is a real danger; but it seems to me to be less dangerous to our safety than the others, though perhaps more so to our morals. Moreover, it is a danger which the Opposition can do more to prevent. It is easier to stop a Government from fighting a war when it wants than to make it fight one when it does not want. The latter is almost impossible, and perhaps undesirable. (I can only think of one war which was forced on the Government by the Opposition in the last 200 years, and that proved to be a very unnecessary and unsuccessful one.) There are some ways of doing the former; the more so because we presumably shall not encourage rearmament without any conditions at all. It ought to be possible to ensure that we shall not simply let ourselves be conscribed by Blimps; indeed, the need for efficiency is so obvious that we shall have a better excuse than ever before for getting rid of the Blimp caste, and so for increasing the chances that the army will be neutral in politics. Further, if the Labour Movement and, above all, the Labour local authorities not merely demand better defence but co-operate in providing it, the members of that movement will have more hold on the decisions of peace and war. The more Labour air raid wardens and the like there are, the harder the Government will find it to land us in a war which the Labour Movement condemns. I do not say it cannot be done, for clever propaganda will do almost anything; but at least it will be harder. If, on the other hand, the Labour Movement stands aside from the agitation for rearmament or discourages it, I do not see what its members gain as citizens or politicians, but I can see a great deal that they must almost certainly lose.

RICHARD PARES

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A MODEST PROPOSAL

SIR,—Though you have frequently referred to poison gas, incendiary bombs and other horrors of modern warfare, there is one of them you appear to have overlooked—the hideous danger to which those of us who live outside London would be exposed by having slum children billeted upon us. Do you not realise that the poor owing to deficient diet and bad housing conditions are less healthy and less clean than members of a more responsible class? This point has fortunately not been forgotten in the correspondence columns of the *Times*. Thus Mr. W. H. Harding, of Christ Church, Oxford, concludes a persuasive letter with the following paragraph:

> In short, Sir, with all the good will in the world to be obliged to entertain for an indefinite period guests of unknown character and susceptibilities is, I maintain, a very severe strain on one's patriotism, and the authorities must be prepared for trouble.

In case of war the authorities will evidently have trouble enough without having to face a rustic rebellion. May I suggest a way out? On the declaration of war it will be a simple matter to liquidate all London children who attend elementary schools. It is important that all cruelty should be avoided, and the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals can be invited to collaborate by placing its lethal chambers at Battersea and elsewhere at the disposal of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. To avoid panic the children should be accompanied into the chambers by those of their adult relations who are unfit to serve in the armed forces or munition works. If this is done, I can promise that we country-dwellers will make no trouble whatsoever; our patriotism will be unstrained, and we shall devote our unstinted energies to the duty of rounding-up recruits.

J. SWIFT

Miscellany

THE WHITE GUARD

No one who saw M. Saint Denis' production of *The Three Sisters* will ever forget it. He has now taken, with Mr. Bronson Albery, The Phoenix Theatre, and assembled a permanent company which includes Miss Peggy Ashcroft, Mr. Michael Redgrave, Mr. Stephen Haggard, Mr. George Devine, Miss Vera Lindsay and others. Other actors have promised their co-operation during the season, notably Mr. Lawrence Olivier, Mr. Ralph Richardson, Mr. Marius Goring and Mr. George Hayes. The last three are acting in Bulgakov's *The White Guard* with which the company opened at the Phoenix last week.

It is a theatrical venture of the first importance and the highest promise. M. Saint Denis' has an extraordinary gift for persuading actors to act from *within* the characters they impersonate; to lose their personalities in their parts—even to forgoing those cherished arts of emphasis, those tricks of voice and gesture it may have taken them long to perfect, when those are more self-expressive than interpretive. The romantic actor or actress in studying a part asks, How can I put most into it? And the answer must be by putting myself into it, using as many of the effective tricks which I have perfected as I can. But M. Saint Denis's method is to make the actor ask first, not how much can I put into my part but what do I *find* in it—a matter which has been settled by the dramatist. The distinction of those of his productions I have seen (with the exception of *Macbeth* at the Old Vic which for some inexplicable reason went wrong) has been that each part seemed to be taken by an actor who was the author of the play.

There was a perfectly impartial distribution of interest, and consequently an enormous enhancement of dramatic effects. You said to yourself, "How magnificently this scene is being played," before you noticed (which was also true) "How splendidly Miss A or Mr. B is acting to-night."

These general remarks apply to the production of *The White Guard*. It is a naturalistic emotional play; not of the first order; but when performed in this fashion a most moving one, though it never works the handle of the pump of tears in us. Its pathos is diffused; not concentrated in moments, or focused upon persons. And here again the interpretation at the Phoenix showed admirable balance. The situation is tragic—foreboding and ruin are in the air; but on the surface of inevitable defeat there floats a shimmer of comedy. Courage takes the form, as in such circumstances it often does, of fecklessness: *vive la bagatelle*—vodka, courtship, cards and friendly nonsense—even a Christmas tree. People do not cease to be themselves or to mark each other's absurdities, with sardonic or friendly chuckles because they are soon all about to die together. From the point of view of dramatic art (and the repeated and re-repeated "calls" on the second night witnessed to the deep impression made), what was important was that while the comedy should be free and even extravagant, it should be always so timed and so confined that the audience could not forget in laughter those realities, which, at moments, the persons on the stage had forgotten, or half-forgotten. There lay half the producer's triumph. The other half can be conveyed by saying that his own was indistinguishable from that of the actors individually considered. Each of them, Miss Ashcroft, Mr. Redgrave, Mr. George Devine, Mr. Langton, Mr Stephen Haggard, Mr. George Hayes (I cannot run through the whole list of names), even Mr. Cairn Cross in the tiny part of the valet, wan, trembling, but so dignified compared with his master, seemed to be responsible in turn for the success of the play—to have been taking *leading* parts if you choose to call them so; though measured by their length, or their bearing on the main action, those parts naturally varied. So that when the curtain rose and fell repeatedly at the close of the play, our applause was a tribute to the whole cast. And much as we might,

individually, have admired the half-laughing, half-indignant resistance of Miss Peggy Ashcroft to her lover Schervinsky's caresses, the burly and tragic *bonhomie* of Mr. Devine as the disillusioned soldierly Viktor, the charming embarrassed, ineffectualness of Mr. Haggard as the youthful poet, the embittered trenchant dignity of Col. Turbin (Mr. Redgrave), or the skill with which Mr. Goring allowed the paltry cold-hearted coward to peep through a sham masterfulness in the part of Yeliena's husband—much as we might have admired such acting that admiration was not quite as great as our appreciation of the whole effect.

The action of the play takes place in Kiev during the winter of 1918. The Tsar and his family have been shot; there is a Hetman of the Ukraine kept on his throne by a German division round whom also the White Guard rallies. Petlura, a sort of brigand leader, with a revolutionary rabble army (soon to be defeated in his turn by Trotsky and the Bolshevists) is besieging Kiev. As far as Petlura was concerned all would have been well with Kiev, had not the German division and the German staff suddenly withdrawn. The Hetman (a big Russian landowner, still residing, I believe, in Berlin at this moment) was a coward and decamped with them, leaving his loyal Russian subjects and his capital at the mercy of Petlura's hordes, and ultimately of Trotsky's army. The play opens at the Turbins' flat where their married sister Yeliena also lives with her husband Vladimir Talberg. He has had private information about the German staff's immediate departure and has attached himself to them, intending to leave his wife to whatever fate may be in store for her. He is in a desperate hurry. He puts the best face he can on his anxiety to save himself, but time is short. Yeliena and his brother officers see through him; and he does not depart without Viktor showing what he thinks of him. In the second act, considerably altered, we are at the Headquarters of the White Guard in the Alexandra College, Kiev. There the news of the defection of the German troops in addition to the staff, and of the flight of the Hetman himself, whom the White Guard have sworn to defend to the death, reaches their Colonel, Alexei Turbin. He disbands his regiment in a bitter speech from the steps of the College Hall, beneath the portrait of the Tsar, and Petlura's rabble rush in. Some officers, notably the fashionable officer of the late Tsar's bodyguard Schervinsky, a fop with a *cabotin* temperament (acted with due absurdity by Mr. Marius Goring, but with hardly enough social distinction) have time to disguise themselves in mufti. But Alexei Turbin is shot and his young brother (Mr. Langton) whose moving, desultory singing in Act I and Act III contribute importantly to the atmosphere, lames himself by jumping from a window. This scene (oratory, turmoil and gunshots) is excellently stage-managed, but it is the kind of scene which is inevitably "stagey." What can be said is that the maximum of possible reality has been secured for it.

In the original in Act II there is a scene of the Hetman's shamming wounds and being carried off to the train on a stretcher. This must have intensified the satire of the Whites and contributed to the ban on Bulgakov's play being lifted in Russia, where it had a long success. It is, indeed, surprising that its performance was permitted at all, for in spite of the vodka scene and the touches which suggest a light-headed, heavy-hearted weakness in the enemies of Bolshevism, the play is extremely sympathetic to the Whites. I have been told that it was only a direct appeal to Stalin on Bulgakov's part whose other play has also been banned, that since he could not earn a living in Russia he should be allowed to emigrate, which secured the release of *The White Guard*. Probably in Moscow Yeliena was represented as not so entirely sympathetic as she becomes in the hands of Miss Ashcroft, and the other characters were more seedy. But nothing could withdraw sympathy from the figure of Viktor, whom Mr. Devine impersonates so vigorously without one touch of exaggeration; or from the helpless gallantry of Alexei.

Throughout the play music supplies an important element: the marching song of the Whites (a tired, charming tune); the Tsarist National Anthem; Nikolka's snatches of intermittent song; the frail dance music from the eighteenth-century clock on the Turbins' mantlepiece, and, lastly (and to the sound of distant cannon) the robuster march to which the Bolsheviks tramp into Kiev. New hopes, which mean despair to others; a new-born ruthless confidence which robs the beaten of all they value and probably their lives—these find expression in the music as well as in the dialogue and characters of this riveting play.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

GUERNICA

Picasso's Guernica, at the New Burlington Gallery

ANDRÉ GIDE writes in *Verve* that *Guernica* fails because it is *excentric*, it breaks away from its centre, or has no centre. Other critics complain that it is neither expressionist nor abstract, but falls between two stools; that it is terrifying without producing any sensation of pity; and so on. All these criticisms are attempts to answer the question whether or not this picture is a great masterpiece. Otherwise, they would not be criticisms at all, but just descriptions, which so far from being *against* it, might well be an account of its merits.

Guernica affects one as an explosion, partly no doubt because it is a picture of an explosion. If one attempts to criticise it, one attempts to relate it to the past. So long as a work of art has this explosive quality of newness it is impossible to relate it to the past. People who say that it is *excentric*, or that it falls between two stools, or that it is too horrible, and so on, are only making the gasping noises they might make if they were blown off their feet by a high-explosive bomb. All I can try to do is to report as faithfully as possible the effect that this very large and very dynamic picture makes on me.

In the first place, it is certainly not realistic in the sense that Goya's etchings of another tragedy in Spain are realistic.

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Guernica is in no sense reportage; it is not a picture of some horror which Picasso has seen and been through himself. It is the picture of a horror reported in the newspapers, of which he has read accounts and perhaps seen photographs.

This kind of second-hand experience, from the newspapers, the news-reel, the wireless, is one of the dominating realities of our time. The many people who are not in direct contact with the disasters falling on civilisation live in a waking nightmare of second-hand experiences which in a way are more terrible than real experiences because the person overtaken by a disaster has at least a more limited vision than the camera's wide, cold, recording eye, and at least has no opportunity to imagine horrors worse than what he is seeing and experiencing. The flickering black, white and grey lights of Picasso's picture suggest a moving picture stretched across an elongated screen; the flatness of the shapes again suggests the photographic image, even the reported paper words. The centre of this picture is like a painting of a *collage* in which strips of newspaper have been pasted across the canvas.

The actual figures on the canvas, the balloon-like floating head of a screaming woman; the figure throwing arms up in despair; the woman running forwards, and leaving behind one reluctant, painful, enormous, clumsy leg; the terror of a horse with open mouth and skin drawn back over the teeth; the hand clutching a lamp and the electric lamp glowing so that it shows the wires, as though at any moment the precious light may go out; the groaning bull, the woman clutching her child, a complex of clustered fingers like over-ripe fruit; all this builds up a picture of horror, but to me there is grandeur in the severed arm of a hero lying in the foreground, clutching the noble, broken, ineffective sword with which he has tried to ward off the horrors of mechanical destruction; and there is pity in the leaves of the little plant growing just above this hand.

Picasso uses every device of expressionism, abstractionism and effects learnt from *collage*, to build up the horror of Guernica. Diagonal lines of light and shade in the background, suggest searchlights and confusion, and the violent contrasts of the faces revealed in a very white light suggest the despair of light and darkness in air raids; despair of the darkness because it is too complete and you are lost; despair of the light because it is too complete and you are revealed to the enemy raiders.

The impression made on me by this picture is one that I might equally get from a great masterpiece, or some very vivid experience. That, of course, does not mean that it *is* a masterpiece. I shall be content to wait some years before knowing that. But it is certainly worth seeing. And if you don't like, or resist, or are overwhelmed by explosions, there are the sixty-seven studies for Guernica, some of them quite unlike anything in the picture itself, which are certainly amongst the most beautiful and profound drawings Picasso has ever made.

STEPHEN SPENDER

THE EARLS COURT MOTOR SHOW

THE 1938 Motor Show does not stage any sensational technical innovations likely to revolutionise the industry; but it offers a number of very practical improvements, each of which will make motoring pleasanter or safer or more economical for the ordinary owner. Pride of place must unquestionably be awarded to an unostentatious change, easily overlooked by a casual visitor, which will halve the anxieties of night-driving on many cars, though not as yet—unfortunately—on the smaller and cheaper models. During the last year or so we have grown accustomed to seeing six lamps adorning the front of medium-priced and expensive cars, namely, two head, two tail, and two "pass" lamps. These passlights are not particularly useful unless they are of tolerable size, such as might retail at six or seven guineas a pair. They emit a non-dazzle beam, not so extensive in range as a headlamp, but covering the whole width of an arterial road with a broad, soft diffused light. When the anti-dazzle switch is thrown to extinguish the headlamps, the passlights automatically come into action, and furnish illumination adequate for speeds up to 50 m.p.h. without dazzling anybody. Their light is so good that a coloured tell-tale is fitted on the dash to inform the driver whether his switch is in the dazzle or non-dazzle position. They constitute an enormous asset in nightwork. Enthusiasts who propose to retain their old cars for next season should add a passlight (one is adequate for all ordinary purposes), taking care not to select a small or cheap example, but paying about 3½ guineas for a good make. They will never regret the purchase.

Second in order of importance comes the method of constructing a car with its frame and body as a single steel structure, built up of pressings by electrical welding. Like the passlight, this attracts no crowd to an exhibit, but it makes for lightness and strength, it furnishes fair protection in the event of a crash, it goes far towards checking the generation of tiresome body noises in prolonged use, and it is a definite factor in the reduced fuel consumption which characterises so many modern cars.

Third in importance stands another alteration apt to elude the attention of the careless, namely, independent front wheel springing. Fitted in isolation, it renders a car slightly more comfortable; but if it is conjoined with the torsion bar system of preventing roll and side-sway, the increase in riding comfort may be quite remarkable. The net effect of these two changes in suspension is to make all motoring much more comfortable; a medium road feels like a good road, the occupants are not flung against each other in fast cornering, and every driver will be able to exceed his previous maximum daily mileage without experiencing the fatigue formerly imposed by shorter runs.

The small car enthusiast will find that in his field bodies are roomier than they used to be; and if he has real occasion to watch his running costs at all closely, he will be surprised at the mileage now obtainable from a gallon of petrol. Neither advantage entails any sacrifice of performance, which on the average shows a slight but definite increase for a given horse-power, often coupled with a reduction in first cost. The floors of such cars are now usually flat, objectionable "footwells" having been eliminated; and the front cockpit will be less obstructed by levers, so that its occupants do not knock their legs, and the driver can leave by the nearside door.

The familiar hoodoo of misted screens, palliated only by the toleration of abominable draughts from pivoted front quarter-lights, has not yet received radical treatment. There are signs that the trade is awaking to the hatred which most owners cherish for this nuisance. One or two firms offer as separate accessories small heating apparatus, consisting of a tiny by-pass from the main water-jacket, through which warm air is drawn by an electric fan. If one of these devices is coupled with an electric defroster panel in the front windscreen, it is possible for a driver to take out a party of bronchial old ladies in mid-winter, and to see what he is about, without freezing his passengers. But the notion is too expensive for cheap cars.

Little has been done to simplify the lubrication of chassis, and automatic or "one-shot" systems are still confined to rather expensive vehicles. There are no signs of a boom in car radio, though several firms market receivers of real excellence.

It is noticeable that some of the cheaper cars are shod with tyres of the "light" variety, such as cannot furnish the mileage which many owners have come to regard as usual. "Heavy duty" covers can in every case be obtained at a slight increase in cost, and are probably well worth the outlay. I should describe some cars in the exhibition as definitely undershod. There is one new tyre which seems to be proof against instantaneous deflation, and normally subsides very slowly when it sustains a puncture; but in actual fact sudden deflation is rare, and seldom dangerous except at really high speeds.

Two or three years ago the industry seemed to hope that tax reductions would convert the British motorist to American standards, and induce him to buy 20 h.p. six-cylinders. To-day the tendency is to concentrate on lower horse-powers, and to equip the twenties more lavishly for a semi-luxury trade, even when their price is low, considering their horse-power. The tens, twelves and fourteens therefore represent astonishing value, whilst the sevens and eights are even better than they were last year. The general improvement between the limits of 7 h.p. and 14 h.p. is so marked that if the war clouds were to lift definitely during the winter, record sales could confidently be expected next spring; nobody who examines this range in detail would willingly retain his 1938 model for another year, if his cash or credit permitted an exchange.

There are no important changes in external finish, but the enamelling of cheap cars approximates more closely than ever to

that of expensive models, both in appearance when new, and in durability under hard use. A two-year-old baby Austin may continue to look shabby beside, say, a Rolls-Royce of the same age; but any contrast will be very largely due to the fact that the expensive car has been most carefully maintained by a chauffeur. A few firms still perpetrate the blunder of including a number of petty nickelled components amongst their chromium plating, with the inevitable result that the nickel gets no more attention than the chromium, and accordingly deteriorates rapidly.

Finally, a word of praise is due to the amazing ingenuity with which the electricians have relieved the owner of responsibility for charging his accumulators. Formerly, the dynamos charged at a rate which varied only with the speed of the engine. To-day the dynamo becomes almost human and adjusts its charge to suit the condition of the cells, and the weather prevailing at the moment. The owner has merely to switch on the dynamo to "charge" and he need never fear that he may overcharge and boil away the electrolyte, whilst the risks of undercharging in winter are mightily reduced. Altogether, this is a sound John Citizen show, with no rash experiments, but a universal and painstaking attempt to give the plain man what he wants at the lowest possible prices.

R. E. DAVIDSON

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"An Elephant in Arcady," at the Kingsway

From Eleanor and Herbert Farjeon something intelligent and witty may be expected, and their joint "musical production" at the Kingsway is not without its bright moments. But the touch is a trifle too literary for the theatre and the libretto suffers from the lack of a fresh and telling expression of its rather old-fashioned design. It is also very doubtful whether the attempt to fit new words to scraps of music collected from no fewer than twelve different composers (including A. Scarlatti, Mozart, Paisiello, Pergolesi, Galuppi, Sarti and Piccini) is ever likely to prove a successful method of constructing a musical play or operetta, although to hear such well-chosen music is in itself a rare pleasure. In the present instance this accentuates the old-fashioned character of the production while there is often a marked incongruity between the music and the text which also sometimes seems to do violence to the original musical form. Otherwise the adaptation by Mr. Edward Irving does not lack skill and the decor by Hugh Stevenson is prettily Arcadian. The whole piece is held together by the excellence of Miss Irene Eisinger in the leading part of Florinda, and it has the great merit of providing her with abundant opportunities to show her talent to advantage. She was well supported by Frederick Ranalow, Eric Starling, Geoffrey Dunn and Linda Gray.

"The Man of Destiny" and "Squaring the Circle," at the Mercury

Mr. Shaw wrote *The Man of Destiny* with a double purpose in mind; first, it was intended as a bravura-piece to display the virtuosity of Henry Irving and Ellen Terry (neither of whom, incidentally, ever had the opportunity to play in it); and secondly, to contradict the popular notion that Napoleon was a great genius dynastically inspired. The result is a witty one-act piece which the author once described as a harlequinade. Napoleon and the lady play harlequin and columbine, while the lieutenant and the innkeeper play clown and pantaloon. The impetuosity and histrionic power with which Mr. Shaw invests the character of Napoleon make good theatre, but in its more serious purpose this play has never been convincing. There is nothing to suggest the Emperor's impassible stolidity, or his power of leadership; and one feels that greater attributes than unscrupulous determination and a sense of drama are required to win the confidence of a nation disrupted by revolution. Mr. Robert Sansom makes a serious attempt to give plausibility to the part, and delivers the famous diatribe against the English with admirable effect. Considered as a whole this piece is excellent entertainment, and one is surprised to learn that this is the first production on a London stage in thirty-one years.

Squaring the Circle is one of the most popular comedies that have been produced at the Moscow Art Theatre; but if one counts on this one is doomed to disappointment. Mr. Kataev is as near to farce as Mr. Shaw is to caricature. Some of the situations are amusing and there are moments when the dialogue is exceedingly witty, but the plot concerns four characters whose presence we easily tire of. Two young workers, Vassya and Abram, share a

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small room in a municipalised lodging-house. Complications arise when they both decide to marry, and for the rest of the time we watch the way they sort themselves out. The play is well produced, and Mr. Donald Eccles, Mr. Holland Bennett, Miss Katherine Kinear and Miss Pamela Gibson make an admirable quartet.

"The Lady Vanishes," lately at the Empire

Max Beerbohm is said to "like his niche," and it is clear that Mr. Hitchcock likes his. For a long time he has confined himself to suspense-and-comedy thrillers, but they get better and better, and his latest, *The Lady Vanishes*, is perhaps the best of all—a capital sample of his highly individual style. He has exploited to the full his particular sense of the sinister and the bizarre, and built up the tension by a masterly use of detail—the heavy panting, for example, of a powerful locomotive brought to a standstill on a side line. Almost all the action takes place upon a transcontinental train, and we are introduced to a typically Hitchcock carriage-full; among them a pince-nezed Baroness, horrifyingly immobile (May Clare), an Italian illusionist, much too genial and expansive (Philip Leaver), and Miss Floy, a little middle-aged governess, all tweeds, whimsy and good sense (Dame May Whitty). When the English girl in the opposite corner dozes off and wakes up to find the governess vanished, the rest of the carriage quietly deny that she was ever there. The ensuing search for Miss Floy is most exciting, and would be even more so if it were not conducted by a pair of amateur detectives and incipient lovers in that tiresome and overworked convention of facetious rudeness to one another; Michael Redgrave and Margaret Lockwood convey admirably the thrill of the chase, but the English should leave amorous wise-cracking to the nation which invented and alone understands that art. The exoticism of this style of humour is emphasised by a genuinely diverting pair of English cricket-maniacs who are protestingly caught up in the story: this is a joke firmly based on reality, but one which might easily have been made into a mere cabaret turn by exaggeration. As it is, however, in the hands of Basil Radford and Naunton Wayne the pair remain delightfully real; disapproving, solemn as owls, miserably cut off from news of England's crisis (the Test Match), they wear a permanent air of grievance tempered only by the inexorable demands of good form. Naturally, when the shooting begins, they turn up trumps, using with judgment and effect an apparently inexhaustible store of ammunition. To complete our pleasure, the film contains a number of lines rendered almost embarrassingly topical by the events of the past few weeks.

John Banting at the Storran Gallery

Mr. Banting is a wit with a great gift for decoration. In a politer age he might have made Punchinellos like the younger Tiepolo or painted Aesop's Fables with the animals disguised as Cardinals or Mandarins. In the present world he is driven often to a more ferocious imagery—landlords become inhuman masks of bark, socialites are translated, very persuasively, into objects with bodies made of wire, surmounted by gaping animal skulls. Mr. Banting has been in beleaguered Madrid, and paints Spanish trees with branches raising clenched fists against the foreign invaders. Yet the prevalent feeling in this exhibition is gaiety: the world is full of a number of things, and each thing is odd and enjoyable, if you have the fresh eyes with which to see it. Mr. Banting is obviously spellbound by the quiddity of objects, the boniness of bone, the leafiness of leaves. He has an acute sense of decorative colour, though sometimes he plunges into monstrous combinations, just for fun, it seems, like a child trying to see just how much mess it can make if it really tries. He is surrealistic in the unexpectedness of his inventions, but lacks the solemnity which makes most surrealists so tedious. Indeed his work reminds one rather of English nonsense verses: the cat and the fiddle, the wise men of Gotham, the owl and the pussy-cat. These are pictures to raise one's spirits, and some of them, *Brains Breathing*, for example, would be ornaments to any house, so delicate are they and so imaginative. One would like to give Mr. Banting a whole room to enliven—are there no London hotel-keepers with a little taste, one wonders, as one gazes incredulously at the decorations in the more expensive restaurants? Mr. Banting's exhibition ought to be a considerable success, for gaiety is a virtue to which most English painters are unable to rise.

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FRIDAY, October 14th—
N.C.C.L. Members Meeting: Miss Eleanor Rathbone will open discussion on Refugees. 14 Holland Park. 8.15.

SATURDAY, October 15th—
L.N.U. Youth Conference to discuss Policy, Defence and National Service. Chief speaker: Capt. B. H. Liddell-Hart. Friends House. 3.
Yvette Guilbert (with Germaine Cernay) in Verlaine Programme, Wigmore Hall, 8.30.

SUNDAY, October 16th—
Dr. Marie Jahoda: "New Methods of Social Investigation," Conway Hall, 11.

MONDAY, October 17th—
J. M. Blackburn: "Motivation—the Urge to Get On," 8 Portman Street, 7.
Public Meeting on Spain. Speakers include Dean of Canterbury, H. N. Brailsford, Ellen Wilkinson; Victor Gollancz in the Chair. Queens Hall. 8.
'Cello Recital by Juliette Alvin, Aeolian Hall, 8.30.
Opening of Vic-Wells Opera and Ballet Season, Sadlers Wells.

TUESDAY, October 18th—
Opening of Union Labour Club, 101 Gt. Russell Street, by Rt. Hon. C. R. Attlee, 7.30.
Public Meeting: "The Church in the Modern State," Caxton Hall, 8.
Prof. Bernal: "A.R.P.", Hampstead Town Hall, 8.15.
"Goodness, How Sad!" Vaudeville.

WEDNESDAY, October 19th—
Archdeacon Owen: "Child Labour in Kenya," Lower Vestry Hall, Little Russell Street, 8.
Public Meeting and Film Show: "Christianity in Germany To-day," Friends House, 8.
Prof. G. W. Keeton: "International Law and the National State," Conway Hall, 8.
B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra Concert, Queens Hall, 8.15.

THURSDAY, October 20th—
Major A. S. Hooper: "The Red Army," 153 Finchley Road, 8.15.
Lord Snell: "Rival Ideologies in Theory and Practice," Friends House, 8.30.
"The Serf," Covent Garden Opera House.

FRIDAY, October 21st—
Reading of Papers on "Socialism" at the Fabian Nursery, 11 Dartmouth Street, 7.30.
Housing Centre Dance, Suffolk Galleries, 8.30. Tickets 5s.

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Changes Riding into Gliding

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

I AM not writing this week about a book but about a pear tree—and readers not interested in pears will do well to turn at once to the next page. The reason for my not writing about a book this week is that I have not nearly finished reading the eleven hundred pages of the one I had chosen—and that my thoughts have cast back to the spring: to Hitler's invasion of Austria on March the twelfth. Political disasters are soon forgotten and so is bad weather. They did not come simultaneously: for when Hitler's army poured into Austria the weather was very warm and everything in nature was astonishingly forward. The sun was hot and the pear's scaly buds writhed and unrolled themselves in slow plant motion, and then the blossom opened. I pollinated it thinking about Hitler: of where and when he would find his next batch of victims. Would it be war in the summer, or in the autumn, or not perhaps till the following spring? These thoughts were in the spring sunshine, as hot as summer, but the bad weather came soon after and left us with hardly any fruit. There was a fortnight when there was a hard frost every night, accompanied by bitterly cold and dry north winds. The cherries and plums and pears had flowered and set fruit—but the little knobs swelling to split the withered calyxes of the flowers went black and looked like minute ebony Indian clubs. The tiny pears split down one side, turned grey and dropped off. The apples were still in bud—but the unopened flowers were destroyed. The pink petals turned coppery as they unfolded, and the stamens were dull brown instead of being full of bright yellow pollen, and the stigmas were black. For a week or two, in the fine weather which followed, the orchards were a blaze of apple blossom—all of it with the reproductive cells killed—and the bees wandered around in a vast cemetery, without finding a drop of nectar or a grain of pollen. We lost the small fruit at the same time: the gooseberries were killed when they were almost fit to pick; all the blackcurrants went—and when the raspberry buds opened a fortnight later, quite half of them had dead, blackened centres. But the *Doyenné du Comice* on the south wall escaped—or rather I saved it.

* * *

It stands waist-high, spans about five feet at the widest, and since it is grafted on dwarfing C. Quince stock, it has hardly grown at all in the last fifteen years. *Comice* is self-sterile, and as the nearest pears in the orchard are some distance away, I have learned that it is better for me to do the bees' work myself. "Take a camel-hair brush," say the books, "and dust on the pollen of another variety." But grains of pollen do not adhere to camel-hair brushes and it is difficult to find pear pollen in any quantity. The anthers of the stamens are either a clear wine-red before they have opened—or else black shrivelled capsules from which the last grain of pollen has gone. You have to look over a whole branch of pear blossom to find one or two flowers with freshly burst anthers. Having picked two or three flowers with fresh pollen in them, I nip off the petals and as many of the unripe and over-ripe stamens as I can. Then I smear the load of pollen grains over the five twisted curling stigmas of an open *Comice* flower, making sure that each gets a little. One can usually fertilise four or five flowers with the pollen from one stamen, but it is slow, delicate work. One can think about Hitler while one is doing it, unfortunately. A week after I had pollinated the flowers the frost came, and every evening I piled up an impromptu barricade of garden tables, deck chairs, and old rugs, so arranged as not to touch the sprays of blossom. In the morning I cleared the pile away. Once it was midnight before I remembered and ran out in my pyjamas and fixed up a blanket with croquet mallets and the garden roller. And sometimes the little pear tree was still covered up when I came out after lunch. But all the same the *Comice* escaped the frost which got everything else.

* * *

For a week or ten days after the flowers drop their petals, you cannot tell which of the little pears have set. They all look alike. Then you see that the stalks of many are turning a translucent yellow—while a few others are a deep green—or are turning red. All the ones with yellow stems break off, and you can brush them away in your impatience to see what are left. The young leaves are unrolling and hide the reddish, fertilised young points which stand straight up, often two together, like the young growing horns of a stag in velvet. You count them, think about thinning them, and reckon out how many the tree can safely carry: a few large pears are worth more than a swarm of little ones. The risk of frost was over before I began to thin them—but after rain there are other dangers. There is nothing snails like better than young pears. On a wet morning you find the stem of the tree, and its branches, and the wall behind, covered with climbing snails, reaching right out of their shells, so that they look like black Viking ships racing along, with their empty shells like huge sails ballooning out above them. Some of the leaves have half-moons eaten out of them by the pirates and some of the fruits have been eaten to the core. The big snails are easy to find, and you can throw them to the thrushes, but there are lots of little ones, which drop off and disappear into the earth or gravel underneath. You can put down lime, or soot, but after heavy rain you must renew your search for snails. A sort of caterpillar, or grub, appears early, glueing patches of leaves together and nibbling pieces out of them. It will gnaw deep holes in the sides of the young fruit. So you pinch leaves all over the tree for worms and caterpillars. Meanwhile the young pears swell, their stalks curve, the fruit hangs down and, since *Comice* grows to be a big heavy pear and the twigs are frail, hammer and nails and shreds of strong rag are needed to give each fruit direct support.

* * *

After that, except for keeping a vigilant eye open for the snails, the pear tree needs no more work—and the swelling fruits are nothing but a source of pleasure. But about the beginning of September I looked—and to my horror found four great pears had been bitten into, and were being hollowed out by the famished wasps. The fruit had failed them; there were no plums, and they were desperate. After I had picked the injured fruit—which rotted before they ripened—the wasps buzzed in dozens about the leaves, and settled on the untouched fruit. There was no time to lose, so I hastily wrapped up each pear in a piece of cotton, or muslin, or silk stuff, tying the gathered up ends so tightly that no wasp or earwig could find its way in. Some of the bits of cloth were red, some yellow, some blue, which gave the tree an untidy, shoddy appearance. Were there no dangers left? "Those pears are just the right height for Georgie to pick!" said the father of a three-year-old boy unexpectedly, seeing me gazing at the pears. His teasing was successful—for his words froze me with horror—and when I saw his grin, I still felt that such jesting on a sacred subject was in bad taste. And then Hitler again—more dangerous than Georgie. The pears, forgotten for nearly three weeks, have been suddenly remembered. I picked them to-day. There are eighteen of them altogether, and as I put them away carefully separated from each other on a tray to ripen, I reflected that they are not safe yet. There is no danger of a mouse—only the worst danger of all—of being forgotten after they get ripe—of their going sleepy and deliquescing and sprouting into mildew fruits. That will only happen if there is a war after all: if Hitler pounces for a third time. Then they will be forgotten, and with them fifty million million times my careful labour will be destroyed and wasted by a single man.

DAVID GARNETT

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DETACHING LABELS

America. By FRANZ KAFKA. Translated by EDWIN and WILLA MUIR. *Routledge.* 8s. 6d.

A bad critical habit is to attach labels to the authors one admires. "A modern Swift," "reminds us of Keats"—how hard it is for a writer to reach his cheap editions without being plastered like a cabin trunk. Such phrases flatter without revealing. If the innocent reader thinks there is any meaning in them (and probably they will be signed with the names of well-known reviewers), let him examine one of them for himself. What is meant by "a modern Swift"? A man who writes as well as Swift, or a man who resembles Swift? If the first (so improbable), we may be certain that such a genius would be startlingly *unlike* Swift or anyone else, because in high literature there are no duplicates; if the second, and our author is merely a Swiftian by-blow, then he obviously does not merit a great name. In either case the assumption is that a writer's talent consists in what he shares with other writers and not in what belongs to him alone—an assumption which falsifies much of what passes for criticism in reviewing. For there are no modern Swifts, no up-to-date Dantes, no new Jane Austens to look out for. "A modern Swift"—to end with that wretched puff—means, if it means anything, a satirist alive or recently dead.

The temptation to peg down a writer at as many points as possible to the past is, of course, strong. Critics yield to it not so much from a preoccupation with their subject, as to bring themselves peace of mind. "There you are now," they address the recumbent figure of their articles, "there you are; stay there, and don't bother me again." But the critic, of all people, should be bothered and bothered again by the authors he encounters. He should never give in with a flat formula. Better, if there must be labels, that they should be private and capricious. I should have more respect for a critic who said that Proust reminded him of his great-aunt than for one who produced the inevitable allusion to Saint-Simon.

At the moment we can watch this fossilisation of opinion round a possibly great writer, Franz Kafka. He is still unknown to the majority of English readers, but already an attitude is hardening, compounded of truth, exaggeration and—in large part—pure irrelevance. The truths: that the sources of his writing must be looked for less in literature than in the German silent films, legends of the ghetto, case-books of psycho-analysis; such writers as Kierkegaard, and perhaps Rilke (*The Notebooks*), may be said to have confirmed his method. Exaggeration: that Kafka is the only European novelist since Proust. And of irrelevancies there are thousands, the silliest of which must be the comparison with Bunyan. How did that name crop up, so that now Mr. Humbert Wolfe and others write automatically of "the best allegorist since Bunyan"? It began, I think, with a sentence in Mr. Edwin Muir's introduction to the first novel of Kafka's translated into English; he pointed out, with some subtlety, that whereas Bunyan's pilgrim knew the way and the goal he must strive for, Kafka's heroes were in doubt about the validity of either. All that has stuck of that observation has been the word "Bunyan." Anything less like *The Pilgrim's Progress* than a story by Kafka would be hard to imagine.

So that already, in the blurb of *America* and in the few reviews which have so far appeared, a false Kafka is being built up. *The Castle* and *The Trial* were allegories, predominantly tragic in tone; *America*, for the most part, is lighter-hearted fantasy. This is the moment, believe it or not, when enthusiasts are beginning to speak of Kafka *as a humorist*. To anyone who picked up *America* knowing nothing of its author and expecting to get a laugh, this would appear complete nonsense; and nonsense, in fact, it is. *America* is only humorous in the sense that dreams are: that is, though intensely and oddly serious at the time, they appear funny when we wake and begin to think about them. The paradox of Kafka's writing is that it preserves that dreamlike quality of serious oddness, that the comic situations in his novels never, or rarely, are allowed to become funny. There are scenes in *America*, for example—the uproar in the lift-boys' dormitory of a hotel, the fat opera-singer attended by sinister and cringing lovers—which could be transferred with little alteration of outline to a Marx Brothers film. But the point is, the situations would then cease altogether to be Kafka's. His realities are gentleness, fear, and deep religious doubt: qualities which do not distinguish Groucho's world. How near—and yet how divided—farce and tragic fear may be, can be seen by bracketing, say, Dickens and Strindberg. Strindberg was a great reader of Dickens and it is obvious that he enjoyed reading him without finding him in the least funny. Almost any situation in a Strindberg play could be transformed into Dickensian farce by looking at it through the other end of the telescope, and *vice versa*. What a note of terror and suspicion there would be in the cry, "Janet, donkeys!" if wrung from the eccentric colonel of *The Spook Sonata*.

Fear was the centre of Kafka's life—deep fear of his father, and consequently of everything—and it is only within the orbit of fear that his writing can be calm, detached, humorous and oddly beautiful. It is a qualified calm, a qualified humour; and that amounts to saying a humour without funniness—for there is such a thing. But unless the reader has experienced in some degree permanent dread of the sort which afflicted Kafka, his work presents almost insuperable difficulty. He does, indeed, superbly distance and focus that dread, in shapes strangely compelling, but unless you have the key to his mood, unless you know it long before you begin reading his books, he may appear curious and even a little dull. In a recent article I classed Kafka among the great "unreadables," a remark which brought me several letters of protest. I meant merely to say that he is not the kind of writer who appeals to every reader with a discriminating taste; that is his limitation. Even his rashest admirer would hesitate to recommend Kafka unreservedly, to make him the article of a literary creed.

In stressing the psychological aspect of Kafka's work, I am not, of course, trying to depreciate his art. That ranks high, however one approaches him. But he is the writer for initiates. And in considering *America*, I am aware of the impossibility of writing a review which would address at the same time those who admire Kafka as I do and those for whom he will be always intolerable. I have preferred to do a general article rather than a review. Initiates will in any case read *America* without my recommendation; waverers may be tempted to try him; outsiders will do well to keep clear. Ought I to have attempted to tell the story of this astonishing novel? It would have read like *Adventures of a Five-Guinea Watch* with touches of Gogol. Better—easier at any rate—to leave it alone. And, for good or bad, I have affixed no label.

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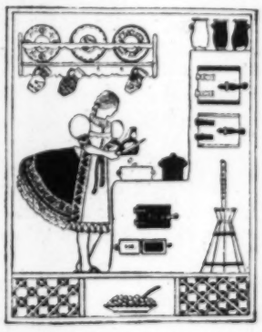

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Stranger than the Rest. By REGINALD MOORE. *Michael Joseph.* 7s. 6d.

The Last of the Villavides, which is translated from the French by Captain J. H. McEwen, M.P., is a slight but wholly exquisite little fantasy. The world of the Villavides is one of mannered autumnal eccentricity, of affectation at its most gracious, and arrogance at its most courteous and refined. Roaring English Dukes, setting fire to their nightshirts and riding their hunters up the main stairway, might have found the Duc de Villavide a little thin-blooded, while German Prince-Bishops with their fountained courtyards and the Heliogabalan splendours of their private chapels might have thought his taste precious, and his library, including the thirty priceless volumes of *How to Unlearn to Read*, a thought esoteric for the public glories of their rococo palaces. But in noble oddity the Duc was unsurpassed, and none of his circle was more than politely surprised when he made a chair from Caesar, his great old oak, and named it his heir and successor. There was, indeed, some competition for the hand of the splendid and accommodating husband, whose jewelled arms showed his wealth, as his elegant legs proved his breeding, and when the lovely Aurore was betrothed to the last of the Villavides the whole of the countryside envied her good fortune. That the chair at length proved an unsatisfactory husband is quite another story. Mlle. de Vilmorin has given her tale the delightful half-credibility of the more peculiar heresies. Once the first premise is accepted (and the delicate, aristocratic world she describes is just as convincing and twice as attractive as that of eighteenth century romance), her characters are as subtle and distinctive as are their social inferiors in Kafka. Beneath the fantastic is a slyly satirical humour, and sometimes one tastes the very faintest flavour of *Candide*.

> Those were indeed happy summers! She could see herself now sitting in the boat beside the officer in black whose name was so difficult to pronounce that, for fear of being made fun of, he had never dared mention it to anyone, and insisting that he should tell her what it was . . .

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> "Very well, I'll tell you; but understand this is a most unwise thing that I do for your sake, Aurore. Excuse me . . ." and in a whisper he told her what his name was.
>
> "Oh! what a lovely name!"
>
> This exclamation seemed to give him pleasure.
>
> "Yes, it is, but it has more than forty letters in it."
>
> "Forty! That's a lot. Could you not find a shortened form for the use of your friends?"
>
> "Shorten it? Certainly not. Under that name my family has for centuries been quite unknown. However hard it may be it is up to me to carry on the tradition."
>
> "Soldiers have so much pride," she remembered thinking, "it is better not to try to understand them."

The Last of the Villavides is the novel in a minor key, but it is none the less an original and distinctive piece of writing. It is one of those literary discoveries, alas, so rarely translated, that lend an additional pleasure to holidays in France.

Another French novel, *One Minus Two*, is that rarity, a convincing study of an actor. Not that Vautrier was a successful actor; on the contrary, he thought himself fortunate with a ten-line part in a cheap theatre, or three underpaid days at a film-studio. But he belonged to the old school of acting that believes the player superior to his part, and imagined that, like Irving, he could steal a scene simply by crossing the stage. Of eventual success he was confident; meanwhile, he made do with the endless praises of his wife, and forgave her podgy stupidity for the sake of her unstinted admiration. Then, in an ill hour, his son becomes a child star and steals Madame Vautrier's idolatry. Worse, the boy is taught to act in the new, restrained fashion, and the poor man discovers he has bred not only a viper, but a Noel Coward. M. Troyat writes well, and with merciless understanding shows Vautrier twisting every way to escape the admission of his own failure. His pathetically unsuccessful attempts to divert his wife's new-found maternal pride, his nobly suppressed hatred of his son, and his unhappy excursion with a blindly adoring mistress are seen with sympathy and described with satire. *One Minus Two* is narrow in scope, and so unpretentious as to be almost unambitious. But, within its chosen limits, it is a moving and most admirable story. And Mr. James Whitall has made a translation of unusual distinction.

Stranger than the Rest is a "realistic" novel; it is, say the publishers, "the story of the Shippey family . . . Shippey, a man of late middle-age, is a decorating contractor, and his largish family are the sort of people you expect the family of such a man to be." There is Bert, motor cyclist and football fan, falls in love with a female Fascist; Alice, she's a fast one, after the boys, is almost raped by Georgie, marries Frank; Ernie, wins a dance band competition, earns a thousand a year in a couple of months, goes to the bad; Arthur, looks at the sea, catches a cold, loses his job, is fine at bottom; Rose, she's the idealistic one, reads Galsworthy, attempts Huxley, falls in love with a married librarian, looks after Mum. They are, in fact, just what one would expect them to be, and their dreary doings, narrated at enormous length, seldom cease to be convincing and never begin to be interesting. In the ordinary way, such a novel would be worth very little attention, even though its author is described "a discovery of real importance." Unfortunately it is typical of a growing and popular school, and succeeds in being stranger than the rest only in its more extreme development. Mr. Moore believes in detailed description:

> Arthur guided a last chip round his plate, making a last runnel in the grease, and managed to collect upon it a smattering of egg yolk. Then he popped it into his mouth impaled on the fork and sat back, pushing the plate away . . .
>
> They had tea in a little café on Charing Cross Road and speech was still taut between them. It was near closing time and they were the last customers. They sat at a table by the window, sipping tea and munching thin slices of bread and butter, a cream pastry each while the green-smocked waitresses lounged in a group by the serving-lift, gazing disinterestedly ahead and chatting in low neutral voices.

If one of the characters lights a cigarette we follow each flick of the ash, if they dial a number we listen to every buzz. The author and his peers would claim, quite rightly, that this is true to life, and maintain, quite wrongly, that it therefore belongs in the novel. The number of paving stones between here and Charing Cross may be informaiton, but it makes no part of science or philosophy. Knowledge *in vacuo* is the sport of madness or a newspaper's letter page, and the cream buns eaten by Rose have no more relation to her character than the number of vowels in *Hamlet* have to Shakespeare's private life. Proust or Jane Austen could give Mr. Moore a few tips on how to use detail; they might also tell him that to say "the rest of the journey would be an incubus" is as original as to remark that "at first Rose eschewed her closest surroundings."

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One day the common reader will take a book like *Stranger than the Rest* and, laying it on his knee, bent imperiously like the crooked finger of a rich restaurateur, seize the corner of the cover with forefinger and thumb, leaving an oblong greasy mark on the shiny black and red dust-jacket with its big letters like the sign on the butcher's shop across the road; then, getting up slowly, neutrally looking out of himself like a tall lighthouse, he will walk to the door, putting his left leg heavily forward so that the blue-striped trouser bought in Tottenham Court Road brushes against the back of his thigh, and then transferring his weight bring forward his right hand and turn the door-knob still sticky where Bessie with her loud laugh and plump calves has just turned it, and open the door, and smell the cabbage stenching in the basement and hear the thick guffawing laughter of two men passing in the street going to catch the jolting 33 Tram, eager to get home to tea and the meshing kisses of their wives, and, raising his arm, throw the book downstairs. And that will be all for the best. JOHN MAIR

THE BALANCE-SHEET OF THE NEXT WAR

Germany and a Lightning War. By FRITZ STERNBERG. Translated by EDWARD FITZGERALD. *Faber and Faber.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Herr Sternberg's book is written upon certain very definite assumptions, which not all his readers will be prepared to accept. He begins with the assumption that a new world war is certain, and that the only open question is when it will begin. He assumes further that, even if at the outset war breaks out only on one of Germany's two fronts, before a decision is reached the struggle will have become general, in both the East and the West, and that the "line-up" of the Great Powers can already be predicted with something near certainty. He also asserts with the greatest conviction that the next world war will be, fully as much as the last, an affair of huge armies, involving the entire man-power of the belligerents, and of intensive mobilisation of industrial as well as military resources. Finally, he assumes that capitalism is a decaying system, menaced by a new world crisis, which is only being held off for the time by intensive rearmament, and cannot even so be long delayed.

All these assumptions may be correct. But they are not self-evident, and Herr Sternberg might well have offered more arguments in support of them than he has thought it worth while to bring forward. But, irrespective of his assumptions, his work is of considerable value and interest. It is primarily an examination of the military strength—involving the economic strength as well—of Nazi Germany, in its relation to the military and economic strength of Germany's potential allies and enemies, whose resources are also studied, albeit less in detail. The author quotes widely from official and semi-official German sources and from the recent writings of German military experts; and his quotations are both remarkably up to date and very much to the point.

Broadly, his argument is that Germany, being already on a war footing and under a totalitarian system, has a considerable *immediate* military advantage in the speed with which her armies can get to work, and the available industrial resources be mobilised for supplying them. If it were possible for a quick decision to be reached by means of a shock attack, the Germans might win. But Herr Sternberg holds that this is impossible in face of the strength of the Maginot Line and the immunity of Soviet Russia from a shock attack. If a quick victory is out of the question, he holds that the Germans are bound to be defeated, because of their lack of trained reserves, of the inadequacy of second-line industrial resources such as exist in Great Britain, France and the United States, and because the Germans will be speedily straitened for foodstuffs and will be hard put to it to maintain imports of supplies necessary for the prosecution of a protracted war. German dependence on food imports, he points out, is fully as great as it was in 1914; and no amount of planning can remove for a long time German dependence under war conditions on huge imports of oil, iron ore, and other really vital ingredients of war production. Italy, of course, is much worse placed than Germany in respect of raw materials; and Japan, also ill-placed, is exhausting its resources in the present war upon China.

Accordingly, Herr Sternberg holds out to Great Britain, France, Soviet Russia and the U.S.A.—which he regards as inevitable allies before the contest is resolved—the prospect of assured victory when the world war comes. But there is implied in his book the unpleasant prospect of intensive mobilisation in these countries, before war actually begins, of industrial as well as military resources, on a scale which will carry them a long way towards a totalitarianism of their own.

What will be chiefly valued in the book is the excellent account given of the economic strength and weakness of the leading Powers, well illustrated by figures of production, importation and exportation, and financial power. Anyone who wants a handy reference book dealing with these matters will find Herr Sternberg's book exceedingly useful. It has the rare merit of being well translated into English, so that it is readable despite the author's tendency to recite the same facts over and over again. G. D. H. COLE

HOW WE CAN HELP TO MAKE PEACE SECURE

If there is to be lasting peace, it will come through the will of the peoples to understand each other, and the knowledge to support this understanding. For it has been shown, at the eleventh hour, that people of all nations fear and detest war, and desire to live at peace with one another.

Here is one way in which *we* can help to make peace secure. We can fit ourselves to understand people of other lands, to meet them and to talk to them *in their own language*. To be divided from other men by the barrier of different tongues is to be divided indeed.

We, as English men and women, are sometimes criticised for being insular in our outlook. It is said, in particular, that we are diffident about learning the other man's language, and that we expect him to talk ours. If this is true, how can we hope for understanding and sympathy on a basis of equality?

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Mr. Anthony Eden in the House of Commons, Oct. 3rd, 1938.

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TOULOUSE-LAUTREC

Toulouse-Lautrec. By GERSTLE MACK. *Cape.* 25*s.*

In the background of some of Toulouse-Lautrec's finest compositions appears the portrait of a fierce-looking elderly man, whose pink cheeks are set off by explosive whiskers. This is the artist's father, Comte Alphonse de Toulouse-Lautrec, an eccentric and irresponsible personage who, now and then, might be seen caracoling through the Bois de Boulogne on a mare saddled and bridled in Cossack fashion. Himself he not infrequently wore fancy dress; and, at a certain stage, he would dismount, milk the mare into a large vessel that he carried for the purpose, empty it with an enthusiastic flourish, remount and gravely continue his promenade. At other times, he remained in the country, shooting and hawking. To this exceedingly selfish, if attractive and amusing, old gentleman, his heir's deformity had come almost as a personal affront. Having broken both legs in early adolescence, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec combined the torso and head of a grown man with the pitiful lower limbs of a stunted child. Moreover, he was as ill-favoured as his father was handsome; but, whereas the father, disappointed in his only son, took very little interest in his work or ambitions, the son could never quite escape from the parental influence. Fundamentally, the two men had much in common. They had the same pride, the same gusto, the same love of life.

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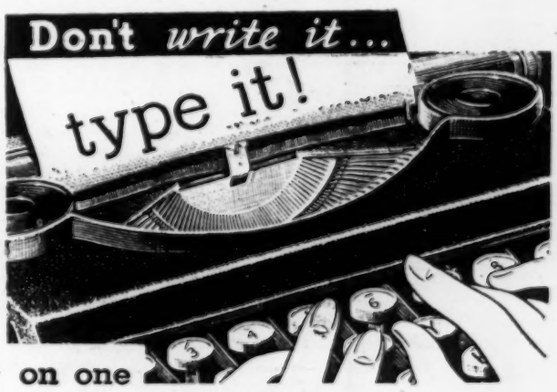

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Outwardly, the divergence of tastes was striking. Comte Alphonse was a passionate votary of every sport; and no doubt it was because his father spent so large a part of his time in the open air that the painter early decided to turn night into day, lived in the smoky atmosphere of bars and music-halls, and resolutely refused to meddle with landscape. For landscape-painting he developed a positive horror. In art, he would inform his friends, only the figure existed. "Landscape is nothing, and should be nothing, but an accessory; the painter of pure landscape is an idiot. Landscape should be used only to make the character of the figure more intelligible . . . Landscapes by Degas are wonderful because they are dream landscapes; Carrière's are like human countenances. If Monet had not given up figure painting, what might he not have accomplished!" The scenes that Toulouse-Lautrec preferred, from which he extracted the astonishing beauty and variety of his greatest pictures, were all confined to a single quarter of urban Paris. Their lighting was not the light of sun or moon, but the greenish illumination of flickering gas-jets as it falls upon painted canvas or powdered skin, or is reverberated from the flashing depths of bar-room mirrors. Here were the artificial paradises he lived in and dreamed of. Here his imagination expanded in colour and line.

What is astonishing in Toulouse-Lautrec's achievement is not so much his psychological penetration—the almost macabre skill with which he reproduces the quality of jaded unwholesome flesh, the droop of a tired eyelid, the meretricious smile on an exhausted mouth—as the energy, simplicity and directness of his artistic approach. His matter may be *fin de siècle*, but not his manner; and we are reminded again and again that he was a man of great virility, unusual independence and uncommon physical courage who laughed at and made little of his own crushing disabilities. To compare Lautrec with a Conder or a Beardsley is to be convinced both of the immense superiority of the French painter's genius and, from a general point of view, of the tremendous advantages of the French attitude in questions of life and art. Conder seems pretty, and Beardsley naughty. Lautrec, an artist of tougher fibre and far deeper insight, never descends to aping the moralist or playing the immoralist, but is content to record what he sees with poetic clarity. Thus, there is a grave distinction in the long series of pictures and drawings that he derived from his knowledge of Parisian brothels. *Au Salon: Rue des Moulins* (now at the museum of Albi, but recently shown at a Toulouse-Lautrec exhibition in Bond Street) is one of the noblest and most spacious canvases to which he ever set his hand. It would be absurd to suggest that it is merely an essay in significant form; but the element of human portraiture and critical observation, implicit in the mechanical attitudes, here prim and there shameless, of six bored, dispirited, fleshy women, is an integral part of the beauty of line and mass. Lautrec does not defend, deplore or moralise. He states—with incomparable gusto and unblushing honesty.

Mr. Gerstle Mack's biography—the first full-length biography of the painter to appear in English—could not on its own merits be described as a particularly well-composed or interesting book. But it is packed with information of the highest value. The author supplies material for an extremely complete portrait of Toulouse-Lautrec himself—his many endearing personal characteristics, his extraordinary aptitude both for work and for dissipation, his odd habits, his alcoholism, his unswerving devotion to his art—and helps to fill in the background of the period. To understand Lautrec, we must know something of the world that he frequented—*la Goulue*, whose "crisp hawklike profile" is so distinctive and delightful a feature of the magnificent Moulin Rouge scenes; her favourite partner, *Valentin le Désossé*, in his rusty black frock coat and funereal top hat, who danced with an agility and sense of rhythm that no other male performer ever equalled; *Jane Avril*, melancholy and romantic, who survives to this day in an asylum for aged women; *Chocolat* and *Footit*, the famous clowns, and a crowd of similar Parisian celebrities who bound, prance and gesticulate through Lautrec's pictures. Mr. Mack also provides us with some extremely illuminating sidelights on Toulouse-Lautrec's artistic prejudices and prepossessions. The modern painter he loved best was (as might have been expected) Degas; he also admired Renoir and Forain and shared the current enthusiasm for Japanese prints. But his reverence for Ingres he always retained and, when he visited London, would spend hours in front of the *Battle of Sant' Egidio* by Paolo Uccello. "Of a portrait by Piero della Francesca he said: 'If one could only paint like that! It's painted as simply as the door of a carriage.'" Mr. Mack's biography, in addition to its other merits (which, as I have indicated, are documentary rather than literary or interpretative), is equipped with almost sixty excellent illustrations, including several photographs of its fascinating hero. The trick photograph of the artist painting his own portrait is at once engaging and slightly horrifying, genial and sinister.

PETER QUENNELL

The International Crisis . . .

and the war it almost brought about has resulted in tremendous alarm and fear in the hearts of all peace-loving people. The situation has also produced an enormous amount of muddled and confused thought, and some people in their efforts to see things in a clear, unbiased light have only succeeded in making their thoughts—and emotions—more chaotic.

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The author of this book is Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the New Zealand Minister of Finance. He is also the author of three semi-autobiographical novels which have had good circulation. His chief responsibility at the moment is the organising of a vigorous housing scheme financed by advances from the Reserve Bank.

The book is unusual in many ways. Mr. Lee has a terse, pungent style of writing that is very effective, though some of his material looks like official data. He sets out a striking record of achievement by the present Labour Government; but in doing so expounds a policy of Socialist expansion that will perhaps come as something of a shock to readers on this side of the world. It may be that his views are somewhat in advance of the Cabinet's immediate aims and the electorate's wishes; but the Dominion has already taken bold steps along the road to a socialised economy. It is, of course, a favoured land with rich resources and an enterprising population in which the opportunist pioneer tradition persists. It is also a small community, and, with its high level of political education and a long experience of efficient Socialist enterprise, as well as comparative freedom from deeply entrenched vested interests, it can undertake experiments that would bring convulsions to an older and more complex community.

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In a brief review it is impossible to discuss or even mention all of the interesting questions raised by Mr. Lee's vivid description of the Labour Government's aims and methods. By far the most important questions he raises, however, concern the public control of the monetary system. The Reserve Bank has been nationalised, the forty-year-old Government majority control of the Bank of New Zealand is being made effective and Mr. Lee, at least, is ready to make full use of these exceptional financial powers to promote Socialist development.

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should not be able to make intelligent and sound use of public credit in the public interest without endangering monetary stability. There is no evidence that what has so far been done in New Zealand has been dangerous to the country's credit. There is much fear that it may become so. This fear is largely based upon the undoubted fact, to which the board of the Reserve Bank has recently called attention, that London assets have been drawn upon rather heavily, betokening an adverse balance of payments and probably a flight of capital. This is not due to the guaranteed price for dairy produce, which in the year just past resulted in a profit of over £900,000; but to a continuance of high public and private expenditure in a period of falling export receipts. If the present recession, as now seems likely, proves to be short-lived, this drawing upon reserves may prove to have been well justified.

In the long run, however, no country, particularly if it has large overseas obligations, can continue to expand its domestic credit faster than its real productivity—and in New Zealand's case export receipts are a large element in the national income. It will be an interesting test of democratic government under favourable conditions to see if its handling of public credit can bring the expansion which Mr. Lee desires, and which is already partly achieved, without degenerating into inflation.

So far there has been no necessity to impose exchange control and there need be no such necessity. The Labour Government, in the Prime Minister's words, can keep "a commonsense balance in its productive and developmental agencies"; but it cannot, by creating "sufficient purchasing power" within the Dominion, prevent slumps in the markets to which its exports go. It can carry through such slumps without shortening sail by drawing upon accumulated reserves, and this it is doing at the moment. But it cannot, by puffing out its credit, continue to sail ahead of the purchasing power of its overseas customers. There is, up till the present, no evidence that it intends to try anything so foolish.

This is a different and more important problem than the question of overseas debt service. No Dominion loan has ever been defaulted. The Labour Government is, however, reducing as fast as it can the heavy burden of overseas obligations. In two years it has reduced the annual debt service by over £500,000. Using conversion where possible, and redeeming debt, in some degree by realising available assets, it is bringing down a burdensome fixed charge.

It is also quite clearly levelling up incomes. Graduated land tax has been restored, income-tax has been increased and is heavier on the moderate incomes, the sales tax has not been repealed. Mortgages and mortgage interest have been heavily written down from the levels of the post-war boom. On the other hand, Civil Service salaries, wages, pensions, and unemployment benefits have been raised. There are, of course, many points of friction. The mortgagees, the bankers, a good many shareholders, the bigger landowners, those who pay unemployment tax and will pay the new 1s. in the £ for health and social insurance, those conscious of income-tax and rate burdens, as well as a rising cost of living, do something more than grumble. New Zealanders living retired lives (in the New Zealand sense) abroad feel rather strongly the iniquities of a Government such as this. All who are opposed in principle to State Socialism must view its activities with increasing alarm.

This, however, is not what Mr. Lee meant when he wrote that "increased socialisation of industry will give us for the first time a really discontented community." He was referring rather to the state of mind that Kirsova of the Russian ballet described in her comment: "New Zealand is very lovely; the people generally are comfortable, but so dull." No reader of Mr. Lee's book can doubt that their dullness has been jolted. There is no reason why this good work at least should not continue. The Dominion is now more productive, more people are at work, standards of living are higher, and opportunities for real education and cultural achievement greater than for years past. In large measure these results have come from a reversal of deflationary policies. They have involved State action with many of its difficulties and weaknesses; but New Zealand is habituated to State enterprise. On the financial and monetary side there is a bold use of public credit but no sign as yet of monetary instability. If "vaulting ambition" does not ignore the elementary fact that New Zealand is a little country largely dependent upon being able to sell its surplus produce to the rest of the world, there seems no reason why the gains already made should not be consolidated and extended.

J. B. CONDLIFFE

THE TROWEL

Letters from Benjamin Disraeli to Frances Anne, Marchioness of Londonderry, 1837-1861. Edited with an Introduction by the MARCHIONESS OF LONDONDERRY. *Macmillan.* 7s. 6d.

Frances Anne, second wife of the third Marquess of Londonderry, was an heiress and the daughter of an heiress: described by Disraeli as "half-ruffian and half great-lady," she exercised power by her abilities as well as by her rank and wealth, and employed her widowhood in managing her Durham collieries. A dashing soldier and a capable ambassador, her husband shared the extreme Tory beliefs of his half-brother, Castlereagh, and was on one occasion dragged off his horse by the fury of the English populace. To gain the Londonderrys' support was for a rising young politician, entirely lacking in "connections," evidently both important and difficult. Disraeli tried the treatment that was afterwards to prove so successful with the Queen: he used flattery, and laid it on with a trowel. The arrogant Marchioness may at first have regarded the foppish young Jew with contempt not unmixed with disgust, but he caught her in his web, only to lose her for some years by his marriage with a wealthy goose. Lady Londonderry enjoyed a witty bachelor, but how could she be brought to receive Mrs. Disraeli? A copy of *Sybil* did the trick, with the help of a letter:

> We will not presume to ask you to honour us by visiting us to-morrow, though the gratification would be deep, and my wife would esteem it the highest possible distinction, because all this, even to decline, might trouble you. But the often recurring feeling of regret having at this moment dominion of heart, I cannot resist its expression.
>
> I will not apologise for it, for I feel you can comprehend me, since I know, from experience, that you have not only a great station, but that cultivated mind that prompts to sympathy.

This Levantine obsequiousness persists in the later letters, but the tone grows unctuously confidential, and the author dramatises himself with gusto:

> Instead of apologising for not before availing myself of your permission to lay my pen at your feet, I ought to supplicate your pardon for now daring to address you. For what can a hermit, who has been immersed for four months among those beechen groves of Bucks which even Julius Caesar could not penetrate, and who has seen no one, have to offer worthy of your delicate air, fed, I doubt not, by all the secret histories of the cabarets and saloons of Europe?

Lady Londonderry continued, no doubt, to think him a bounder, but he was amusing, he was appreciative, above all, he was becoming useful. When the detestable Whigs introduced a Bill for the compulsory inspection of coal mines by Government officials, Disraeli made a strong speech against such ill-considered legislation. He succeeded only in delaying the measure, but the coal-owning grandees must have felt that their condescension had not been wasted. Also it was pleasant to receive all the latest gossip, and such caustic sketches of their *bêtes noires*, such as Palmerston:

> He is really an imposter, utterly exhausted, and, at the best, only ginger-beer and not champaign, and now an old painted Pantaloon, very deaf, very blind, with false teeth, which would fall out of his mouth when speaking, if he did not hesitate and halt so in his talk. . . .

This letter was written in 1855, and the old Pantaloon survived for another ten years to baulk Disraeli's ambitions. Lady Londonderry died in the same year as Palmerston, and thus missed the principal successes of her *protégé*. But his relations with her had taught him how to gain control of the proudest women, and when he repeated the old tactics with the Queen, he found a fortress far easier to take.

The present Marchioness of Londonderry, who like her predecessor has enjoyed a Prime Minister's friendship, has edited this little book with some intelligent comments. (Some of the best passages we already knew from the Monypenny and Buckle *Life*.) She concludes that while determined will-power is the distinctive characteristic of the Jewish race, this strong idiosyncrasy tends to dwarf imagination, but Disraeli combined the two forms of ability: consequently he stands out "as a man of fervid ideality, of wide views and deep vision." It is impossible, one agrees, not to be interested in this extraordinary man, but can one applaud the cynicism with which to obtain power he sacrificed truthfulness and human dignity? Some of us notice that the more we read about Disraeli, the more we sympathise with Mr. G.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

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Alexei Tolstoi is said to be Russia's best-selling novelist, which means that his circulation reaches millions, and his works have the publicity, and almost the authority, of encyclicals. *Bread* is a novel of the Civil War, and, by following the adventures of a few individuals, describes the retreat from the Germans in the Ukraine, and the struggle against the Don Cossacks that centred round the siege of Tsaritsin, the "Red Verdun." But when Stalin, Trotski (green spotlight, please) and Voroshilov play prominent parts in a Soviet novel, it may or may not be fiction but must be read as official history. The literary value of *Bread* is inconsiderable. There are some purple military passages:

> The Section-Commanders and Commissars rose from the blood-stained trenches, deafened, earth-spattered men crawled, and, splitting their blackened mouths with a shout, forcing open their eyes, filled with dust and hatred, ran, stumbling out to meet the reptiles, curse them! Like pitchforks into a stook of corn they thrust their four-sided bayonets into some narrow-shouldered, tight-collared little officer, into the belly of some livid sergeant, swollen with Ukrainian pork, etc., etc.

and some pleasant character sketches. But the civil war M. Tolstoi wages is the one that is still carried on from Mexico City to the Moscow Palace of Justice. It is fitting enough, no doubt, that Stalin should be curt and resolute and speak in clear tones, with merry little furrows at the corners of his eyes, while Trotski, with his wolfish brow and Tartar whiskers, "clad in an elegant dinner jacket," should appoint Whites to high command and perpetrate the filthiest treacheries. Unfortunately, M. Tolstoi is not content with implied abuse, but leaps down from his ivory tower to mud-wrestle in the mire of slander that has left unstained so few of the Revolutionary heroes. Take a single example, from the lengthy passage devoted to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Trotski has delivered his famous "Neither peace nor war" speech.

> Trotski had violated Lenin and Stalin's instructions, and had committed a terrible act of treachery; instead of peace and a breathing space, Soviet Russia, unprepared for resistance, was given immediate war. Russia was handed over to the torture.

Actually, Trotski was obeying the explicit majority vote of the Central Committee; if Lenin and Stalin *really* instructed him otherwise, the terrible act of treachery must be charged against them. *Bread* will be enjoyed by those who like propaganda and books entirely devoted to blood and valour.

Letters of the Prince Consort. Selected and Edited by DR. KURT JAGOW and translated by E. T. S. DUGDALE. *Murray.* 18*s.*

Queen Victoria's remarkable talent for letter-writing was in no way shared by her husband, and after reading this volume one understands better than ever why he never became popular. Though possessing certain intellectual (and aesthetic) gifts, he was conceited, rigid and entirely lacking in spontaneity. This volume contains a letter he wrote to Sam Wilberforce on his appointment to the See of Oxford, in which he treats the Bishop to a lecture upon his future duties. (The writer of this impertinent document was aged 26.) The most interesting letter concerns the betrothal of "Bertie" to Queen Alexandra: the Duke of Saxe-Coburg had objected to the match; the Prince Consort explains that he and the Queen share his objections and have remonstrated with their son. "We have explained to him the difficulties in the way of such a choice as well as we could, and he has taken it in as far as a youth of his age and disposition can do. Since, however, these views are shared by no one else in England, and we have against it the Ministers, the press and the public, all we could do in practice was to discover some other *partie* that Bertie would accept (for he wishes to marry early and it will be for his good morally, as well as socially and politically). There is such a complete lack of competition for the honour! We made opportunities for Bertie to see two others, and he took a dislike to both." The book would have been more valuable if it had been edited by the translator instead of by a German archivist, whose comments show an entire misunderstanding of English history.

Through French Windows. By DAVID HORNER. *Macmillan.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

This most agreeable book is an essay in the appreciation of France. Mr. Horner enjoys the French themselves as fully as he does their architecture, and with the deftest fingers sketches a dozen characters in a provincial town and a small seaside resort, producing a microcosm of French society. The book begins with reflections upon Biarritz, Perpignan, Toulouse, Bordeaux and Le Havre—the gateways to France. Next we are given a short story, of which Dijon and an English fellow-traveller are the heroine and hero. And finally, the greater and most satisfying part of the book describes a sojourn with a French aristocratic family in Provence. Obviously the writing of the book has been a labour of love, for it does not fall into the categories favoured by the subscribers to circulating libraries. The retired business-man will not find in it a day-dream painted in the aniline colours of the popular travel-book—there are no dusky dancing-girls, devoted blackamoors or unexpected snakes. And the amateurs of "nice novels" will be equally disappointed. This is a book for the intelligent. Mr. Horner is amused by the characteristic, and sensitive to the beautiful. He indulges in elaborate fancies without tumbling into archness. He writes in long, winding sentences, sometimes conspicuously influenced by the style of Proust. The portraits are highly convincing, and one at least is drawn direct from life—the custodian of the Papal Palace at Avignon, a man who has inflicted himself upon thousands of innocent travellers and is here preserved like an anopheles in amber. Sometimes Mr. Horner is too ready to praise: Lyons seems to us less sympathetic than he suggests, and not everyone can share his enthusiasm for the Burgundian tombs. But the delights and humours of French life are beautifully rendered, and the book can be vigorously recommended. All who love France will be enchanted with it, and those who do not, may begin to understand.

The Coming Victory of Democracy. By THOMAS MANN. Trans. from the German by AGNES E. MEYER. *Secker and Warburg.* 2*s.* 6*d.*

While the title of this remarkable pamphlet does justice only to its author's heart, its contents certainly do full justice to his head and heart; for they put, lucidly and succinctly, the humanistic case against Fascism. Herr Mann does not mince his words: he knows that moderate language is lost on the present rulers of Germany. Going to the root of the matter, he posits contempt of humanity as the spring of Fascist action. "The anti-human, dictatorial mentality of our day ignores . . . spiritual conscience. It considers the consciousness of sin, or spirituality, as injurious to military prowess. It teaches optimistic heroics—in direct and stupid contradiction of the extreme contempt for humanity, which it exalts in the same breath. . . . But it is impossible to understand how completely despicable creatures, lacking every moral and spiritual attribute, could undertake to be contemptuous." The lecture occupies only eighty-three pages, but in it Herr Mann uses all the powers of his life's experience and his literary technique to bring to light the underworld of political criminals who are at present engaged in defiling the unhappy masses of Central Europe. It is hard to see how any reasonably intelligent person could resist his conclusions; certainly none should fail to read this pamphlet, which may well prove a classic of its kind. The letter which follows it, as an appendix, is certainly already one; addressed to the Dean of the University of Bonn, in reply to a letter depriving Herr Mann of his honorary degree, it is one of the most dignified and devastating letters ever written. It is the complete, necessary and sufficient answer of liberal humanism to the animal yells of Dr. Goebbels and the Nuremberg rally.

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

ALTHOUGH an exceptionally large pile of interesting new records awaits discussion, I must begin by drawing attention to the sweeping list of withdrawals from the H.M.V. Connoisseur Catalogue. This list is six pages long, and includes more desirable sets than I can find room to name: among them are the best, in many cases the only, versions of such standard works as Beethoven, Brahms and Debussy Violin Sonatas, Mozart and Dvorak String Quartets, two Schumann Symphonies, and a fine Mozart Piano Sonata (K.310). Among single records there are a few which rank among the great achievements of the recording studio: Edwin Fischer's Handel *Suite in D minor* (DB 2378), Schorr's blazing Pizarro aria from *Fidelio* (D 2112), Elena Gerhardt's *Vergebliches Ständchen* and two other Brahms songs (D 2007) and her Schubert and Schumann *lieder* on DB 1544. None of these will be available after the 31st of this month. The squandering of such material as this is pitiful, but since the gramophone companies are not benevolent institutions, they cannot be expected to retail indefinitely what the public won't buy. But why should not records be remaindered? Apparently the manufacturers fear that the commonsense arrangement adopted by publishers would damage their prestige. Consequently thousands of these records will, by early November, have found their way into the melting pot, to emerge later on in the shape of tea-time drivel and hot-cha-cha.

In proportion to the size of its output Decca is easily the most progressive of the companies, and they put us under a fresh debt of gratitude by the issue of Benjamin Britten's *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge*, played on three records by the Boyd Neel String Orchestra. Most musical critics, if you buttonhole them, would admit the vast difference between such vital, inventive, innately musical writing as this and those amiable Odes and

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CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Rates, and all information on page 589

nondescript Psalms served up for provincial festivals by dear old Dr. X.; but their notices are so polite and judicious that the public concludes that all this new music is pretty dull stuff. Now Mr. Britten's *Variations* are anything but dull; you cannot listen to ten bars of the Introduction without recognising the confident tone of a man who has something to say and plenty of technique to say it with. Mr. Britten is not yet 25, and if he develops along the lines of the best parts of this work, we may soon expect something first-rate from him. Try the first side: after that magisterial Introduction and the slight, wispy theme, there follows an *Adagio* whose full-blooded emotion is most impressive even at a first hearing. Of the remaining movements the most successful are the *March*, the *Romance*, the *Aria Italiana* and the *Bourrée Classique*—the two latter forming part of a series of genre pieces which show more inventive power than feeling for style. The oddly named *Aria Italiana*, for example, is really an exhilarating pastiche in the manner of the Can-Can in the *Boutique Fantasque*, and the ingenious *Wiener Waltz* misses the essence of its model. The latter part of the work does not wholly sustain the promise of the opening: the much-admired *Funeral March* strikes me as self-consciously in the dumps (like the *C sharp minor Prelude*), *Chant* is little more than an experiment in sonorities, and the Fugue is rather like any I.S.C.M. fugue. But the whole work, owing largely to its remarkable concision, leaves a powerful and distinct impression; above all, it is enormously alive.

Decca also issue six records containing Bruckner's *String Quintet in F major*. This is the only chamber music written by the Austrian peasant organist, and it dates from his maturity, if that word may properly be used of a composer who always remained naive. The case of Bruckner is one of the stumbling blocks of criticism, many Teutons claiming him as a supreme master while the rest of the world smiles, jeers, or remains quietly indifferent. To me he seems a man with heavenly ideas but no power of organising them into convincing wholes. He was a wonderful improviser, one of those rare beings who cannot let their hands roam over a keyboard without creating lovely, often highly original, patterns of sound. Open his scores where we will, interesting and beautiful figures, themes, progressions abound; what is lacking is the power of growth, of logical movement. He is the most stagnant of composers; constantly stopping and starting off again on another path, he relies pathetically on four-bar sequential treatment and has no notion how (or indeed when) to leave off. Look at the ends of all four movements in this Quintet; all equally feeble, and, stranger still, all fundamentally the same—a tonic pedal on the cello with *crescendo* (or *decrescendo*) arabesques climbing and intertwining above it; it is the gesture of a gauche, charming peasant who does not know how to get out of the room. But because he meanders and is gauche, do not dismiss him unheard; outside Schubert there is no one whose ideas are more lovable, and the *Adagio* of this work has a grave, remote beauty that is touching in spite of the repetitions. The Prisca Quartet (with an extra viola) are in sympathy with the music, but a fuller-toned recording was needed to bring out its many beauties of texture.

The second *Violin Concerto* of Prokofieff, played by Heifetz and the Boston Orchestra (Koussevitzky) on three H.M.V.'s, is a far more attractive work than the first, which was recorded for Columbia by Szigeti and Beecham. The latter belonged to a period when all music, no matter what its nationality, seemed to have been written in Paris, in a corner of the Ritz Bar with one eye on Diaghileff. Now that he has reached his Op. 63 Prokofieff permits himself to reveal an unblushingly romantic vein of Slav melancholy. It is pleasant to note the professional deftness with which he mixes this new romanticism with his old athletic neo-classicism, though I am not so sure that, on closer acquaintance, the two moods really blend into a unity. But it is an attractive work in which Heifetz finds scope for all his incomparable skill and beauty of tone. Parlophone issue Mossolov's *Steel Foundry*, which is the piece generally known here as *Music of Machines*, a purely imitative movement of no musical value whatever; on the reverse, doubtless with conscious humour, they have placed a "Troubadour's Serenade" from Glazounov's Suite *The Middle Ages*. Respighi's delightful arrangement for string orchestra of *Ancient Dances and Airs for the Lute* (*3rd Suite*) is beautifully played and recorded on three Telefunken records (two large and one small) by Hans von Benda and the Berlin Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra. The pick of the set is E 2537, containing a finely vigorous *Passacaglia* after Roncalli (1692), and on the reverse two captivating trifles from a Corelli Suite.

So much new music leaves little space to discuss classical re-recordings, but most of the month's issues are of music which has already been better done. Bruno Walter plays and conducts the great sombre *D minor Concerto* of Mozart (K.466) with the Vienna Philharmonic (4 H.M.V.'s) in masterly style, and the warmth of piano and orchestral tone in the Romanze is very striking; but cleaner finger work and less resonant recording lead me to prefer the older set made by Fischer and the L.P.O. H.M.V. also issue a new Mozart *Clarinet Quintet* (Benny Goodman and the Budapest Quartet) which is to be avoided; compression on to three records works out badly and has led to some hurried tempi, Goodman's playing cannot compare for beauty of phrasing and tone with Bellison's (in the recent Columbia set), and the recording is intolerably harsh. Toscanini's neon-lit *Scala di Seta* Overture (Rossini) has not half the grace of Beecham's famous record, which also finds room for that delectable morsel of Handel, *The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba*. The Handel-Brahms *Variations* are beautifully played on three Cols. by Petri, but they could have done with a warmer recording. Playing and recording are both ideal in a new Eileen Joyce Parlophone disc; but, as so often with this artist, the coupling is bad: those who want the charming, unhackneyed Fauré *2nd Impromptu* will not want the Liszt *Liebestraum*, and *vice versa*. Kitain is excellent in Chopin's *2nd Ballade* (Col.).

The most splendid vocal record is Flagstad's *Ah, perfido!* (Beethoven), complete on one large and one small H.M.V. At times impressively Beethovenish, at times a delightful echo of Mozart's concert arias, the piece suits Flagstad down to the ground, and this is her best record. Ebe Stignani (*Samson* and *Linda di Chamounix*) and Tancredi Pasero (*Vespri Siciliani* and *Faust*) continue their Parlophone operatic series; in the old days one put up with indifferent accompaniments for the sake of fine singing, now the position is more or less reversed. Karl Schmitt-Walter makes for Telefunken two more admirable *lieder* records, one of Brahms' *Ständchen* and *Minnelied*, the other of Wolf's *Benedeit die sel'ge Mutter* and his lovely *Dass doch gemalt*. This company alone has the wit to issue slips containing the words of songs, for the want of which I can make no intelligent comment on Decca's two records of Ivor Gurney songs, sung by Nancy Evans, for I can scarcely make out a word she sings. Whereas

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LECTURES AND MEETINGS

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A Lecture on "UNCONVENTIONAL ASPECTS OF EGYPTIAN ART" will be given by PROF. J. CAPART (Corresponding Fellow, British Academy; Hon. Vice-President of Egypt Exploration Society; Director of Fondation Egyptologique Reine Elisabeth, Brussels) at UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON (Gower Street, W.C.1) on OCTOBER 17th, at 5.30 p.m. The Chair will be taken by Mr. Sidney Smith, M.A., F.S.A. (Keeper, Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities, British Museum). Lantern illustrations.

A Course of Two Lectures on "FORMES DE SOCIABILITE ET ESPECES DE DROIT" will be given (in French) by PROF. GEORGES GURVITCH (Professor of Sociology in the University of Strasbourg, and General Secretary of the Institut International de Sociologie Juridique) at THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS (Houghton Street, Aldwych, W.C.2) on OCTOBER 17th and 18th, at 5 p.m. At the First Lecture the Chair will be taken by Prof. H. F. Jolowicz, LL.D., M.A. (Professor of Roman Law in the University).

A Course of Three Lectures on "PUNCTUATION IN MEDIAEVAL MANUSCRIPTS (PRINCIPALLY ENGLISH)" will be given by PROF. WOLFGANG KELLER (Professor of English Philology in the University of Munster) at UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON (Gower Street, W.C.1) on OCTOBER 18th, 20th and 25th, at 5.30 p.m. At the First Lecture the Chair will be taken by Sir Allen Mawer, M.A., Litt.D., F.B.A. (Provost of University College). Illustrations.

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Mr. A. W. Clapham: The Early Architecture of the Cistercians. October 25th.
Mr. A. W. Clapham: Sant Ambrogio, Milan. October 27th.
Prof. A. P. Laurie: The Pigments used in Illuminating MSS. November 1st.
Monsieur J. Lafond: French Stained Glass in the Early Sixteenth Century. November 3rd.
Prof. D. Talbot Rice: Byzantine Painting. November 4th and 11th.
Dr. Joan Evans: French Sculpture, 1080–1300. November 7th, 10th, 15th.
Mr. Campbell Dodgson: Altdorfer (d. 1538). November 8th.
Mr. J. Summerson: Gothic Architecture. November 14th, 18th, 24th, 28th.
Dr. J. Puig i Cadafalch: Recherches sur l'origine de l'Art Roman. (The lectures will be delivered in French.) November 21st and 22nd.
Mr. A. Gardner: The Virgin in Medieval Sculpture. November 29th.
Mr. A. Gardner: English Foliage Sculpture. December 2nd.
Prof. T. S. R. Boase: The Crusades in the History of Art. December 9th and 12th.

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of visitors and intending visitors to the U.S.S.R.,
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LECTURES AND MEETINGS—continued

LIBERALISM AND CURRENT PROBLEMS. Lecture at 8.15 p.m., in the CAXTON HALL, VICTORIA STREET, S.W.1 (Near St. James's Park Underground Station), on Thursday, October 20th. "COLLECTIVE SECURITY," by THE RT. HON. VISCOUNT CECIL, D.C.L., LL.D. Chairman: THE LADY VIOLET BONHAM-CARTER.

Reserved seats, 2s.: unreserved, 1s. Tickets and Syllabus on application to the Lecture Committee, Liberal Party Organisation, 42 Parliament Street, S.W.1 (Whitehall 8762), or tickets may be obtained at the Hall on the evening of the Lecture.

INSTITUTE OF PSYCHO-ANALYSIS.

A course of three public lectures on "Some Asthetic Problems" will be given by Dr. Ernst Kris at 96 Gloucester Place, W.1, on Tuesdays at 8.30 p.m. Chairman: Dr. John Rickman.

1938. Nov. 1st. Art and Pleasure.
Nov. 8th. Art and Magic.
Nov. 15th. On Artistic Creation.

Each lecture will be followed by a discussion.

Tickets for each lecture or for the course may be obtained at the door. Fee for the course: 5s. Single lecture: 2s.

F.P.S.I. PROF. G. W. KEETON on "INTERNATIONAL LAW AND THE NATIONAL STATE." Wednesday, October 19th, at 8 p.m., at the large Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1. Tickets: Members, 6d.; non-Members, 1s. From HON. SECRETARY, F.P.S.I., 4 Fitzroy Street, W.1.

HAMPSTEAD Russia To-day Society. Major A. S. Hooper lectures on the Red Army. 153 Finchley Road, Swiss Cottage. 8.15 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 20th. Admission 6d. and 1s. Refreshments. Exhibition of photos.

CHILD LABOUR IN KENYA. Archdeacon Owen, October 19th, 8 p.m., Lower Vestry Hall, Little Russell Street, W.C.1.

SEX EDUCATION CENTRE, 13 Eccleston Street, S.W.1. Consultations, 1s.; Library books, 2d.; Catalogue, 6d. Open Mondays, 7–9 p.m. Visitors welcomed.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn. Sunday, October 16th, at 11 a.m., DR. MARIE JAHODA: "NEW METHODS OF SOCIAL INVESTIGATION." 6.30 p.m., Concert Chamber Music. Admission free. Visitors welcome.

THE ETHICAL CHURCH, Queensway, Bayswater, W.2. Sunday, October 16th, at 11 a.m., MR. BLACKHAM: "THE DISILLUSIONED MAN." 6.30 p.m., PROFESSOR MORRIS GINSBERG: "REASON IN ETHICS."

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS
Rates, and all information on page 589

APPOINTMENTS, VACANT & WANTED

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

LECTURER IN CHEMISTRY.

The University of Cape Town invites applications for a lectureship in Chemistry vacant from March 1st, 1939. The lecturer must be competent to give instruction through the Afrikaans and English media. The normal commencing salary of a lecturer is £400 per annum, and, subject to paragraph 4 of the conditions of appointment, rises by annual increments of £25 to £600, or in certain cases may rise to £750.

Applications (in duplicate) must reach the Secretary, Office of the High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa, Trafalgar Square, London, W.C.2 (from whom forms of application, conditions of appointment and a special memorandum may be obtained) not later than November 5th, 1938. Applicants, in addition to submitting copies of testimonials, must give the names of three referees.

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE EDUCATION COMMITTEE.
RUTHERFORD TECHNICAL COLLEGE.

APPOINTMENT OF PRINCIPAL.

Applications are invited for the post of Principal. Candidates must be graduates of a British University and must have had suitable technical school experience. Commencing salary £800 per annum, rising by annual increments of £25 to a maximum salary of £1,000 per annum. The gentleman appointed will be required to take up duties as soon as possible, and in any case not later than April 1st, 1939.

Form of application to be obtained by forwarding stamped addressed foolscap envelope endorsed "Rutherford Technical College," should be returned to the undersigned not later than October 29th, 1938.

THOS. WALLING,
Director of Education.

City Education Office,
Northumberland Road,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF THE WEST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.
BINGLEY TRAINING COLLEGE FOR WOMEN.
APPOINTMENT OF PRINCIPAL.

Applications are invited from women holding a University Degree or its equivalent for appointment as Principal of Bingley Training College. Training College experience not essential.

Salary £700 per annum with board, residence, ordinary medical attendance and laundry (subject to a deduction of 5 per cent. for superannuation).

Further particulars and forms of application may be obtained from the Education Officer, County Hall, Wakefield, Yorks.

Last date for receipt of applications: October 31st, 1938.

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF FULHAM.

DEPUTY BOROUGH LIBRARIAN.

Applications are invited for the above appointment from Fellows or Associates of the Library Association. The scale of salary is £360 × £15–£450, but the commencing salary may be advanced by the Council having regard to the qualifications and experience of the person appointed.

Further particulars and an application form may be obtained from the undersigned on sending a stamped, addressed, foolscap envelope. Applications, endorsed "Deputy Borough Librarian," must be received not later than noon on October 28th. Canvassing will disqualify.

Town Hall, WILFRED TOWNEND.
Fulham, S.W.6. Town Clerk.

WANTED, woman organiser, preferably married, for North of England. Experienced in social work. Knowledge of country life essential. Salary £250. Full particulars to The Land Settlement Association, Ltd., Broadway Buildings, Westminster.

TEMPORARY assistant wanted for the sale of Children's Books and Christmas Cards in a large progressive bookshop in Sheffield. Write A. B. WARD, 24 Chapel Walk, Sheffield.

CHRISTMAS BOOKSELLING. Saleswoman required by suburban store to take charge of Christmas Book Dept., early November to Dec. 24th. Must have good knowledge of current literature, both adult and juvenile, ability to talk about books, and some business experience. Apply by letter or in person to the Staff Manager, Boardmans, 54/70 Broadway, Stratford, E.15.

WANTED, young progressive woman to help with two children, at school, and light housework. Country. Kent. Box 3053.

ADAPTABLE, patient girl over 18 wanted for Home Nursery School, return board, lodging and training. Ham. 5051.

YOUNG MAN (25) married, at present in responsible job in Switzerland, seeks post in England. Two years' business experience, English and German. Oxf. Hons. Degree (P.P.E.). Interests: Economics, Antiques, Politics. Industrious, good refs. In England November. Box 2990.

MAN, lonely without any roots at 34 years old, idealistic and unsuccessful, pleads for work with charming and considerate young people. Country or seaside. Kennel, poultry, market gardening, or even work in house and garden. Box 3000.

AUSTRIAN lady, middle-aged, good Viennese family, seeks resident post to English lady as companion, light domestic duties, children. Speaks English, knowledge French, shorthand typist, generally cultured, accustomed literary work. Highest references. Box 3040.

STENOGRAPHER would like work two evenings a week. HENDRY, 288 King's Road, S.W.3.

BREAD-AND-BUTTER job in London sought by young woman (23), wishing study art spare time. Secretarial experience. MIDDLETON, 41 Walton Well Oxford.

the analytical leaflet always provided with symphonies is a mere luxury, the printed text is an *absolute essential* to the enjoyment of vocal records; when will the companies learn this? I wish everyone would bombard them with protests and curses until they mend their ways. And some of them might take more trouble over their labels. The latest Parlophone Historical Issue is a triumph of mislabelling; they call it "*Crispino e la Comare*, Parts 1 and 2, sung by Oreste Luppi, Baritone," the truth being that Luppi was a bass, who sings here with two baritones (Corradetti and Magini-Coletti) a *buffo* trio from the once-popular opera by the brothers Ricci, composed in 1850. The performance is brilliant and the music, in the *Don Pasquale* tradition, highly amusing; I should like to know more about the elder Ricci, who calmly composed (in 1838) a new *Nozze di Figaro*, published a volume of vocal pieces called *Les Inspirations du thé*, and died in an asylum in Prague. DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

Week-end Competitions

No. 449

Set by John Mair

A recent news-item revealed that Mr. Chamberlain is to employ a well-known publicity man to boost the National Government. The usual prizes (Two Guineas and Half a Guinea) are offered for the best advertising copy on these lines; it is suggested that the technique of Horlicks, White Horse, or Austin Reeds (narrative style) might prove both appropriate and effective.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, October 21st.
2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.
3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.
4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 447

Set by Allan M. Laing

The Japanese Board of Tourist Industry once issued a booklet entitled *How to Behave before Foreigners*, for the instruction of women and girl attendants in hotels, etc. Among its precepts these two are characteristic samples:

Don't ask a foreigner's age unless it is absolutely required.

Light pranks add zest to your service; but don't pull people's ears.

The usual prizes are offered for ten similar rules applicable to British waitresses, etc., in their treatment of foreigners. Satire and humour are *not* barred.

Report by Allan M. Laing

For the majority, the English waitress in her dealings with the unhappy foreigner is either above criticism or in no need of advice. I doubt if the sum total of advice, sarcasm and humour offered by competitors this week would impress, sting or amuse the average Nippy, so that you would notice it. She might condescend to a giggle at William Bliss's "When you have served an Italian with spaghetti, do not call the other waitresses to come and watch," or emit a strangled "You are an one!" at his "Do not whisk the flies off the bald heads of fat foreigners . . ." She might toss a henna'd head at being forbidden by L. M. J. to "draw the attention of a man in a turban to the hatstand" or to "offer melon to a negro or roast ham to a Jew." But on the whole the flood of mingled advice, reproach and innuendo would, I think, slip off her like water off a duck's back. I offer a few samples of the various categories:

SARCASTIC

Always stare fixedly at a foreigner: it will help him to remember your face. (W. Leslie Nicholls.)

Always be ladylike. (W. Leslie Nicholls.)

This type of customer must not be confused with the deaf, the dumb or the feeble-minded. (M. R. D.)

Do not expect a Frenchman to understand a menu written in French. (J. C. B. Date.)

Do not serve (the foreigner) too quickly. It is part of his pleasure to observe the table manners of the natives. (Jaguar.)

HUMOROUS

Italians regard spaghetti as a meal rather than as an exhibition of manual dexterity. Your interest should therefore be confined to admiration from a distance. (J. C. B. Date.)

Remember that in serving foreign customers you are responsible for the good name of your country. You should therefore do all in your power to dissuade foreigners from ordering cabbage. (J. C. B. Date.)

Always make it clear that you're not that sort; or (if you are) that you know where to draw the line. (A. P.-R.)

Don't wear suspenders with tennis socks. It embarrasses the customer. (Martin Walsh.)

SERIOUS

You will pay your guests the highest compliment if you assume wherever possible that they are English. (S. W. Green.)

Do not shout or use baby talk. (L. M. J.)

Avoid humming tunes in the presence of any customer of whose nationality you are in doubt. (M. R. D.)

I think something more than justice will be done by awarding Half a Guinea each to A. P.-R., W. Leslie Nicholls, J. C. B. Date and E. Davis—those four, no more! And since there is room to print only one entry, I select that of E. Davis, from which I have not quoted above.

KATE'S DECALOGUE

Thou shalt only love Clark Gable,
Not the Dago at the table;
Adore no graven image but
Thine own; and never fail to cut
An uncouth customer quite dead
(Especially if he wants more bread).
Thou shalt not hasten; always let
The alien generation fret.
Smile not at all; but make 'em feel
Grateful to gobble *any* meal.
Should this one mention things forgot,
Let the blighter have it—*hot*.
The timid hand-bell once attend,
Comes the Beginning of the End.
Use thou, when crushing such a one,
Th' inhuman speech of Kensington.
The thing thou said'st when *he* said *that*
Tell Flo in full, while drinks go flat;
And use thy duster only when
Thy presence torments tired men. E. DAVIS

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 302.—MIRANDA TURNS THE TABLES

"I suppose, Miranda," I said, "that you're quite a whale on Algebra now you've passed the School Certificate. I hear you got a Credit in Mathematics."

"I surely did," said Miranda. "In fact, I can turn the tables on you, Caliban. I made up a problem about our ages—mine and Stella's and Eva's and Lucinda's and Dorothea's—and father was completely stumped by it, though he's every bit as clever as you are."

She showed me her problem, which ran as follows: "The sum of our ages is five times my age. (By 'age,' throughout this problem, is meant 'age in years.') When Stella is three times my present age, the sum of my age and Dorothea's will be equal to the sum of the present ages of the five of us. Eva's age will be three times her present age and Lucinda's age will be twice Stella's present age, plus one year."

How old is Miranda?

PROBLEM 300.—THE TWO MOTOR CARS

There are two admissible solutions to this problem.

(*a*) 569 and 431 [Constable B wrong].
(*b*) 761 and 239 [Constable D wrong].

The wording of the problem was meant to exclude (*b*), and perhaps it is a matter for argument whether it does so or not, since Constable D is only partially wrong. But so many solvers have arrived at this answer that I think it would be unfair to exclude it.

PROBLEM 299.—ORCHIDS FOR THE JUDGE

A set of Low's Cartoons goes to G. P. Pinder, School House, Shrewsbury. *Six* points are awarded. CALIBAN

PRIZES FOR PROBLEM SOLVERS

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to the sender of a correct solution selected at random.

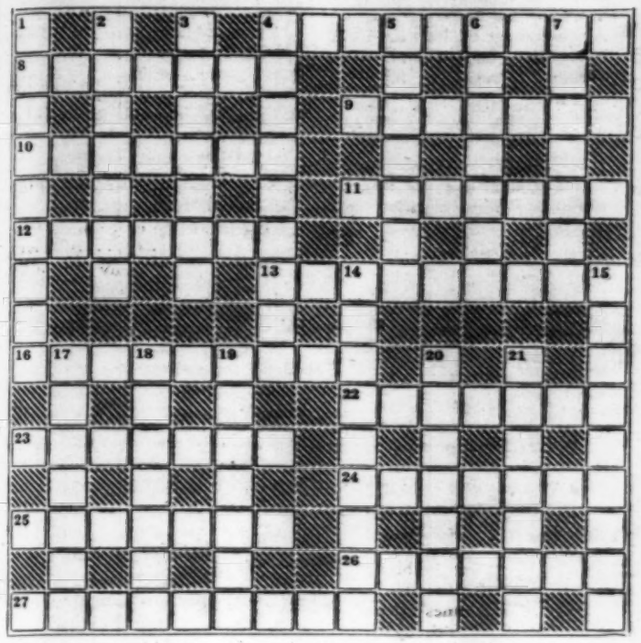
In addition, a record is kept of correct solutions sent, and of the points scored weekly by solvers. On attaining 100 points a solver is entitled to a prize consisting of any book (or books) reviewed or advertised in these columns, of a value not greater than 10*s*. Solvers who have won a prize on this basis are eligible for a second prize on attaining a further 120 points, and for a third prize on attaining a further 150. Solutions must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o the Editor, and must reach this office not later than Tuesday week following publication of the problem. Solutions to two problems may be sent in one envelope, but on separate sheets of paper.

Some indication should be given of the method of solution.

[U.S.A. Competitors. The Editor regrets that the prizes offered in our Week-end Competitions cannot apply to American competitors.]

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 449

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is
Miss Harris, 45 Fairfield Lane, Barrow-in-Furness

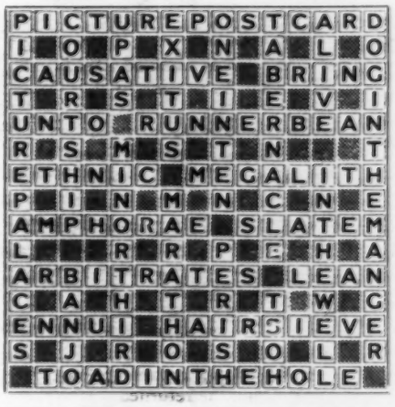
ACROSS

4. Love letter by penny post. (9)
8. Great downfall of an artist returning with profit. (7)
9. Tim's back at starting. (7)
10. Here they will put you into top gear. (7)
11. This little bird is called Tom. (7)
12. We are on the street. (7)
13. They had seats for the journey, but not in the carriage. (9)
16. No doubt they ring madly in March. (9)
22. Where Players get their supplies. (7)
23. Put the parson in the bucket. (7)
24. His ancestors were a mixed lot. (7)
25. A bit of bread for the horse? (7)
26. Takes more than one bite at it. (7)
27. Opposite long-stop? (9)

DOWN

1. Where others besides a King of England have lost personal belongings. (9)
2. Part I always gets an unfair start. (7)
3. Obviously he's the fellow to sack. (7)
4. One should be intent on such a seat. (9)
5. Rose to be a hiker. (7)
6. The anchor comes up to the appearance of the Cheshire Cat. (7)
7. Comes out of a terrine. (7)
14. Biblical will. (9)
15. Un-in-formed. (9)
17. Aviator's toast. (7)
18. Suggest that one should wrap up well to go to the post. (7)
19. It remarks upon those who are late. (7)
20. Future sound of a couple of cricket extras. (7)
21. Her colt causes one to chuckle. (7)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD



PERSONAL

LAVENDER FLOWERS. Come and help gather. Lady Margaret's Guest House, Doddington, Kent.

AUSTRIAN refugee girl (15), no prospects, seeks home. Is there generous family? Box 3005.

WOULD anyone give home and education to small Viennese Jewish girl, aged nine? Very musical, good family. Reply Box 3015.

EXPERT Shorthand-Typist, Graduate, desires morning work. Own typewriter. Varied experience. Terms moderate. Box 3032.

YOUNG woman, politically ambitious, offers her voluntary, though inexperienced, services for any Left-wing work. Write Box 3020.

BROTHER and sister, fifties, educated, cultured, horticulturalists, offer to care for and improve South country house and garden in return free winter lodging. Write Box 3017.

GERMAN for Beginners, Readers of Poetry, Scientists. Write DR. WALDE, 167 Gloucester Terrace, W.2.

GERMAN Doctor seeks pupils for German lessons. Conversation. Use of large German library. Moderate fees. Box 2951.

AUSTRIAN Engineer seeks English conversation in exchange Russian or German. BM/TEST, W.C.1.

STUDENT would exchange French conversation for motor driving lessons. Box 3058.

PRIVATE STAMP COLLECTOR wants exchange friend. Write W. S. H., 9 Chesterford Gardens, N.W.3.

NEW ZEALANDER in London. Reader contemplating living there would like to meet. Box 3009.

CZECHOSLOVAKIAN young lady urgently requires bedroom in exchange German or French lessons, also tuition. Expert linguist. Box 3039.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION: Dept. of Child Development. Nursery play group, not more than six children, 2–5 years, now received each morning, 9.30–12. Three guineas per term. Write DR. SUSAN ISAACS.

VIENNESE lady (25), Jewish, good family, fond of children, excellent domestic work and sewing, seeks position in household or with children. IRENA KOFLER, Vienna II, Vereinsgasse 24/15.

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* ONE WORD. Place names, *e.g.*, St. Albans, Ashton-under-Lyne, Golders Green. 'Phone numbers, *e.g.*, HOL. 3216. 'Phone 2414. Groups of five letters or figures, *e.g.*, Y.M.C.A. or S.W.18, etc. TWO WORDS: Number and name of street, *e.g.*, 24 St. George's Street, 24 Broadway.

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PERSONAL—continued

HOW TO STOP SMOKING. Quick, cheap, lasting, harmless, as grateful 1,000's testify. Either sex. Write: CARLTON CHEMICALS, 251 Birmingham.

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REARM for peace but ANTHONY PANTING for photographs. Please ring WEL. forty-nine fifty before 11 for an appointment at 5 Paddington Street.

"THE ART OF RECORD BUYING"
The 1938 edition of this book contains over 100 pages of information that is invaluable to gramophone owners. Send 2d. in stamps for a free copy.
E.M.G. HAND-MADE GRAMOPHONES LTD., 11 Grape Street, London, W.C.2.

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A LONG Review of a new Novel on your breakfast table every morning! Details: "SYNOPSES," 6 Racquet Court, E.C.4.

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By DIVES

MARKETS AND OIL SHARE OUTLOOK—TRANSPORT "C" PROBLEMS—COPPER QUOTA.

SECOND thoughts on the crisis have led to further depression in the market in British Government funds and to speculative buying of commodity shares and American industrials. Wall Street has been giving a good account of itself, and the Dow Jones rail index has at last broken through its previous high. At the moment of writing the market is consolidating its advance, and the bulls are regarding any momentary weakness as an opportunity for buying more stock. An important development was the formal decision of U.S. Steel, Bethlehem Steel and other leading manufacturers to cut sheet steel prices for the automobile trade by $4 per ton. I have previously advised against a purchase of American steel shares after their rise, and feel all the more confirmed in my recommendation of motor shares. There is no doubt that this cut in sheet steel prices will give a fillip to the motor trade.

* * *

The last time I discussed oil shares, which was in August, the oil news from America was better. Now it is worse. The industry entered the winter season with excessive stocks on hand, and although the Texas producers have come to the rescue by closing down their wells two days a week there is still too much crude oil being produced. The culprit seems to be California, but there are new developments in Illinois, Michigan and Arkansas, which have added their bit. The result is price-cutting in certain producing fields—last week in Louisiana and Arkansas and this week in the prices of the Mid-Continent. The news that Mid-Continent prices, which have been pegged for nearly two years, had broken was a shock to some investors, but I would regard the cuts as a blessing rather than a disaster. There can be no profit for the big marketing companies in buying crude oil and selling it in the form of refined products at the present low prices of gasoline and fuel oil. However, a cut in crude oil prices always affects the oil share market adversely, particularly in Wall Street, and that is why British oil shares have been reactionary. My inclination is to buy certain of them on a further fall:

	Low 1938.	Price.	Dividend %.	Gross Yield %.
Shell Transport and Trading ..	3¾	4⅝	20 net	£6 6 0
Burmah Oil	3⅝	4 9/16	20%	*£4 17 9
			if 22½%	*£5 10 0
Anglo-Iranian	3 11/32	5 5/16	25	£4 16 3
Trinidad Petroleum	24/-	38/9 x.d.	12	£6 4 0
Trinidad Leaseholds	4 1/16	5 5/16	30	*£5 18 9

* Equivalent gross, after allowing for a reduced rate of tax.

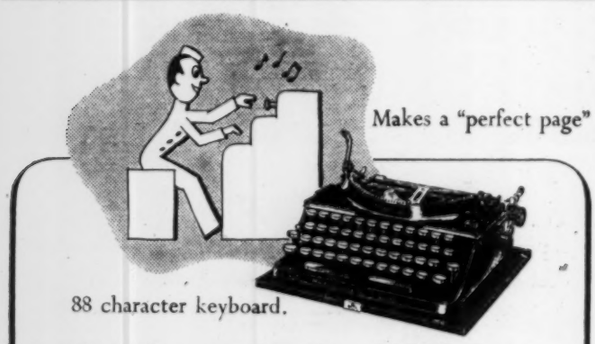
This is not a recommendation to buy all these shares. My choice would be Shell Transport and Trinidad Petroleum Development, and I am glad to see that my recommendation of the latter last week has been justified by the excellent report published on Wednesday. In view of the increasing influence of political risks upon share prices, I would not buy Anglo-Iranian, particularly after their rise this year. If investors hanker after an interest in the wonderful Persian oilfield, let them take it indirectly by buying Burmah Oil. Shell Transport have, of course, their political risks but they are well distributed, and my experience is that what Royal Dutch-Shell loses on the swings it gains on the roundabouts.

* * *

The London Passenger Transport Board's decision to pay a 4 per cent. dividend for 1937-38 may bring to a head the question of a receivership. The Act of 1933 provided that if the Board—after a period of grace which ended with the year 1934-35—failed to pay a "standard" dividend of 5½ per cent. on the "C" stock in any one of three consecutive years, then the holders of not less than 5 per cent. of the "C" stock might apply for a receivership. It was a curiously drafted provision and the Board could have evaded it in the letter, either by withholding sums available for distribution in the past two years, so as to distribute 5½ per cent. in 1937-38, or by raiding this time the £8 million renewal reserve and making it good by cutting down dividends in 1938-40. To its credit, the Board has eschewed these artifices. The distribution for the past three years has been 4, 4¼ and 4 per cent. respectively. It now remains to be seen whether the "C" stockholders will apply for a receivership, and, if so, whether the High Court will grant the application. For the Court has discretionary powers; it need only appoint a receiver "if it thinks fit," and the Act gives it no guidance as to the factors which should influence its decision. The "C" stockholders would probably have difficulty in proving that running costs could be reduced without impairing the service or that increased charges, at the public's expense, would yield substantial extra revenue. But unless the system were more profitable under a receiver, how would his appointment benefit stockholders? The truth is that the L.P.T.B., a public service in private ownership, is constitutionally in an anomalous position. The assumption that 5½ per cent. should be regarded as a fair return on the junior stock is quite arbitrary, and the receivership clause offers the public no protection against possible abuse by the Board of its (clearly necessary) monopoly powers. Meanwhile, at 72, the "C" stock yields about 5½ per cent. on the basis of a 4 per cent. distribution. At this price I consider it reasonably valued.

* * *

The decision of the companies operating the copper restriction scheme, that production from October 15 onwards should be increased from 95 to 105 per cent. of the agreed basic tonnages, was fully justified by the statistical position of the metal. Since May, the month before the quota was cut to 95 per cent., apparent world consumption has risen from 137,000 to 178,000 tons a month, and stocks have fallen from 554,000 tons (end of May) to probably under 465,000 tons at the end of September. In the past month the price of cash copper has advanced from £41 10s. to £45 10s. a ton in London, while U.S. producers have raised their domestic selling price to 10.75 cents per lb. Indications are that the additional output of 6,000 tons per month represented by the quota increase will be easily absorbed; but I shall be surprised if we see a repetition of the run-away price boom which carried copper up to £78 10s. in April, 1937. The low cost producers have an enormous reserve of production capacity; standard tonnages are little more than 60 per cent. of maximum output readily attainable. The past week's rise in price of the metal has been occasioned less by forecasts of shortage than by belief that world-wide currency inflation will lead to higher base metal values even if there is no further early recovery in American consumption. The validity of this belief has yet to be tested.



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MR. H. ERIC MILLER'S REVIEW OF TEA & RUBBER

The Thirtieth Ordinary General Meeting of the above company was held on 11th October in London.

Mr. H. Eric Miller (chairman), who presided, said (in part): Tea estates generally had a satisfactory season and were able to strengthen their financial position where necessary and to distribute higher dividends than for some years previously. At the beginning of December last the International Tea Committee announced that a further 5% of quotas was to be released for export in the crop year which commenced on 1st April last, bringing the exportable percentage up to 92½%. It remains to be seen whether the extra supplies can be absorbed without prices declining to a level which would require the Committee to reduce the exportable percentage.

Reviewing the rubber industry, he said: The U.S.A. petrol consumption figures for 1938 are running at about the same monthly rate as during 1937. There has, however, been pronounced contraction in the output of new automobiles in the U.S.A. and Canada; their sales in 1938 are not likely to exceed 2½ million new vehicles, against 5 million new vehicles sold in 1937. The depression in the U.S.A. has affected adversely not only the absorption of rubber in tyre construction, but to an equal degree in other lines of miscellaneous rubber goods, which represent a quite appreciable offtake of the raw material. Fortunately there has been a change for the better in recent months.

The rest of the world, with the exception of Japan, has been taking rubber fairly steadily on a slightly lower scale than in 1937.

The impact of these events on the policy of the I.R.R.C. has been translated by them into a reduction in the percentage of permissible exports from the figure of 90 per cent. of basic quotas which operated during the second half of 1937 to the low figure of 45 per cent. for the last six months of this year. The sheet-anchor of the industry (in which I include not only producers but distributors, manufacturers and consumers) is the power which the I.R.R.C. have to regulate the exports of rubber from producing countries to meet the needs of a vacillating world. The International Agreement entered into by the Governments concerned has been renewed with minor modifications for five years from 1st January next.

A dividend of 20 per cent. on the deferred Ordinary stock, making 25 per cent. for the year, was declared.

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